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THE COMPLETE WORKS  
OF WILLIAM HAZLITT IN  
TWENTY-ONE VOLUMES

*CENTENARY EDITION*

*Edited by*  
*P. P. HOWE*

VOLUME TWENTY



THIS EDITION IS LIMITED TO  
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# THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM HAZLITT

EDITED BY P. P. HOWE

AFTER THE EDITION OF  
A. R. WALLER AND ARNOLD GLOVER



VOLUME TWENTY

Miscellaneous  
Writings



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MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS





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## MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS

### ON MODERN COMEDY

*The Morning Chronicle.*

October 15, 1813.

SIR,—I believe it seldom happens that we confess ourselves to be in the dark on any subject, till we are pretty well persuaded that no one else is able to dispel the gloom in which we are involved. Convinced, that where our own sagacity has failed, all further search must be vain, we resign ourselves implicitly to all the self-complacency of conscious ignorance, and are very little obliged to any one, who comes to disturb our intellectual repose. Something of this kind appears to have happened to your Correspondent on the subject of the Drama. Indeed, Sir, I should have been very cautious of attempting to remove the heap of doubts and difficulties which seemed to oppress him, but that I thought so obvious a truth as the connection between the manners of the age and comedy could not startle ‘the plainest understanding’; but the moment this obvious truth is pointed out to him, he complains that he is ‘dazzled with excess of light,’ and puts a ready moveable screen of common places before him to keep it out. And then, Sir, I observe, that to fortify himself in his scruples, and lest he should be forced to give up his sceptical solution of sceptical doubts, he has confounded characters with you, Sir, by a dexterous ventriloquism puts his sentiments into your mouth, and has contrived to get the balance into his own hands, and ‘smiles delighted with the eternal poise.’

After complimenting the writer of a former article, by saying that ‘his powers have not languished in the dense atmosphere of logic and criticism’ (a compliment which I am ready to return with equal sincerity), your Correspondent proceeds—‘We confess it did not occur to us, that it is because so many excellent comedies have been written that so few are written at present. To our plain understanding, on the first statement of this circumstance, a conclusion directly the reverse would have presented itself. We should have been inclined to apply in this instance the analogy which we find to hold in almost

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every other, that relative perfection is only the result of repeated efforts, and that, as in the case of an individual artist, till his powers are impaired by age, every successive attempt is in general an improvement on the preceding, so in the art itself what has once been well done, usually leads to something better.'—On this passage I might observe, first, that I am always apt to distrust these modest pretensions to plain understanding. They signify nothing more than that an opinion is contrary to our own, and that we will not take the trouble to examine it. And besides, we all of us refine as much and as well as we are able; only we are not willing that others should refine more than we do. Secondly, Sir, the analogy to which your Correspondent appeals in support of his hypothesis, that the arts are uniformly progressive, totally fails; it applies to science, and not to art.

Farther, your Correspondent observes, 'That the production of many good comedies should render us more severe towards bad ones, and bad poets more averse from exposing themselves, would appear much more likely than that exactly the reverse of all this should happen. We naturally expect from a landlord, who at the commencement of a repast regales us with elegant wines, that he will not place homely ale or insipid porter before us towards the end of it. It was D'Alembert, we believe, who suggested as a great improvement in modern literature, that all our books should be collected together every fifty years, for the purpose of making a bonfire of them,' &c. All this may be very true, but I really do not see what it has to do with the question.

'For true no-meaning puzzles more than wit.'

I am afraid he will think I am at cross-purposes with his theories, but it is really because they appear to me at cross-purposes with facts. For instance, the bad poets do not in the present case seem very backward to expose themselves; but what is it that hinders the good ones (rising like so many Phœnixes out of the ashes of their predecessors) from claiming the admiration that is due to them? Surely, if every succeeding writer improved upon the last, and 'what was once well done always led to something better,' the managers would not damp the rising flame. The progress of comedy among us appears to have been just the reverse of what your Correspondent would have anticipated; namely, from elegant wines to insipid porter, and our critic (if I mistake him not), would make the matter still worse by diluting this insipid stuff with water, in order that it may become still more tasteless, and according to him, more elegant and refined. Our elder comic writers provided choice wines, strong liquors and rich

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viands of all kinds for the entertainment of the public, while our author, seated at the full banquet, like Christopher Sly at the Duke's table, calls out incessantly for 'a pot of the smallest ale.' As to the project of D'Alembert, I have no great objection to it. Only I would propose as a compromise that we should let our present stock remain on hand, and that nothing but reviews and newspaper criticisms should be written for the next fifty years, by which means I shall keep possession of Jonson, Farquhar, Wycherley, Congreve, and Smollett, and in the mean time your correspondent may take a surfeit of Mr. Tobin's *Honey Moon*, *The Duenna* (for whom I have a great respect), and Madame de Staël. I cannot, however, agree with him in the building up of his chronological ladder of taste. Congreve did not improve upon Wycherley, because he was not indebted to him, and Sheridan was indebted to Congreve without improving upon him. Your Correspondent, Sir, writes very well about these authors, but as if he had not read them. As to the hardship of which he complains, that our fathers should have laughed for themselves and for us too, it is but the common course of nature. It is not a misfortune peculiar to ourselves. Even Madame de Staël is forced to go a hundred and fifty years back, for an author to insult the English with, on their want of comic genius, and of the knowledge of those traits peculiar to the refinements of French manners, but which *yet paint human nature in every country*. I agree with your Correspondent in his first letter, that though we cannot write good Comedies, we can assign good reasons why they are not written; and I think we have, between us, made out the reason of the present want of dramatic writers, though I doubt if we should, both of us together, make even half a Menander. But he will have all the advantages on his side, and be as merry as he is wise. Why, after he has laughed folly out of countenance, is he determined to laugh at her as much as ever, and to make good sense or absurdity equally subservient to his spleen? He is bent on laughing at all events—at every thing or nothing; and if he does not find things ridiculous, he will make them so. The fantastic resolution of Biron, 'to laugh a twelvemonth in an hospital,' does not exceed the preposterous ambition of your Correspondent, to extract the soul of mirth out of the schools of philosophy. We cannot expect to reconcile opposite things. If he or I were to put ourselves into the stage, to go from Salisbury to London, I dare say we should not meet with the same number of odd accidents or ludicrous distresses on the road, that befel Parson Adams; but why, if we get into a common vehicle, and submit to the conveniences of modern travelling, do we complain of the want of adventures? Modern manners may be compared to a modern stage-coach: our limbs may be a little cramped with



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the confinement, and we may grow drowsy ; but we arrive safe, without any very amusing or any very sad accident, at our journey's end. But your Correspondent sees nothing in the progress of modern manners and characters but a vague, abstract progression from grossness to refinement, marked on a graduated scale of human perfectibility. This sweeping distinction appears to him to explain satisfactorily the whole difference between all sorts of manners, and all kinds and degrees of dramatic excellence. These two words stand him instead of other ideas on the texture of society, or the nature of the dramatic art. He is not, however, quite consistent on this subject, for in one place he says, that ' the stock of folly in the world is in no danger of being diminished,' and in the next sentence, that there is a progression in society, an age of grossness and an age of refinement, and he only wonders that the progress of the stage does not keep pace with it. Now the reason why I do not share his wonder is, that though I think the quantity of dull, dry, serious, incorrigible folly in the world is in no danger of being diminished, yet I think the stock of lively, dramatic, entertaining, laughable folly is, and necessarily must be, diminished by the progress of that *mechanical* refinement which consists in throwing our follies, as it were, into a common stock, and moulding them in the same general form. Our peculiarities have become insipid sameness ; our eccentricity servile imitation ; our wit, wisdom at second-hand ; our prejudices indifference ; our feelings not our own ; our distinguishing characteristic the want of all character. We are become a nation of authors and readers, and even this distinction is confounded by the mediation of the reviewers. We all follow the same profession, which is criticism, each individual is every thing but himself, not one but all mankind's epitome, and the gradations of vice and virtue, of sense and folly, of refinement and grossness of character, seem lost in a kind of intellectual *hermaphroditism*. But on this *tabula rasa*, according to your Correspondent, the most lively and sparkling hues of comedy may be laid. His present reasoning gives a very different turn to the question he at first proposed. He appears to have set out with a theory of his own about the production of comic excellence, in which it was entirely regulated by the state of the market, and to have supposed that as long as authors continued to write plays, and managers to accept them, that is, so long as the thing answered in the way of trade, Comedy would go on pretty much as it had hitherto done, to the end of the world. But finding that this was not exactly the case, he takes his stand near the avenues leading to the manager's door, and happening to see a young man of worth and talents, with great knowledge of the world, and of the refinements of polished society, come out with his piece in his hand,

## ON MODERN COMEDY

and a face of disappointment, he is no longer at a loss for the secret of the decline of Comedy among us, and proceeds cautiously to hint his discovery to the world. But it being suggested to him that the change of manners, produced partly by the stage itself, and the total disappearance of the characters which before formed the very life and soul of Comedy, might have something to do with the decline of the Stage, he will not hear a word of it, but says, that this circumstance, so far from shewing why our modern Comedies *are not so good* as the old ones, proves that they *ought to be better*; that the more we are become like one another, or like nothing, the less distinction of character we have, the greater discrimination must it require to bring it out; that the less ridiculous our manners become, the more scope do they afford for art and ingenuity in discovering our weak sides and shades of infirmity; and that the greatest sameness and monotony must in the end produce the most exquisite variety. For a plain man, this is very well. It is on the same principle, that some writers have contended that Scotland is more fertile than England, the excellence of the crop being in proportion to the barrenness of the soil. What a pity it is, that so ingenious a theory should not have the facts on its side; and that the perfection of satire should not be found to keep pace with the want of materials. It is rather too much to assume on a mere hypothesis, that the present manners are equally favourable to the production of the highest comic excellence, till they do produce it. Even in France, where encouragement is given to the noblest and most successful exertions of genius by the sure prospect of profit to yourself or your descendants, every time your piece is acted in any corner of the empire, to the latest posterity, we find the best critics going back to the grossness and illiberality of the age of Louis xiv. for the production of the best comedies; which is rather extraordinary, considering the infinitely refined state of manners in France, and the infinite encouragement given to dramatic talent. But has it never occurred to your Correspondent, as a solution of this difficulty, that there is a difference between refinement and imbecility, between general knowledge and personal elegance, between metaphysical subtlety and stage-effect? Does he think all manners, all kinds of folly, and all shades of character equally fit for dramatic representation? Does he not perceive that there is a point where minuteness of distinction becomes laborious foolery, and where the slenderness of the materials must baffle the skill and destroy the exertions of the artist? He insists, indeed, on pulling off the mask of folly, by some ingenious device, though she has been stripped of it long ago; and forced to compose her features into a decent appearance of gravity; and he next proceeds to apply a microscope of a new construction, to

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detect the freckles on her face and inequalities in her skin, in order to communicate his amusing discoveries to the audience, as some philosophical lecturer does the result of his chemical experiments on the decomposition of substances to the admiring circle. There is no end of this. Your Correspondent confesses that 'we are drilled into a sort of stupid decorum and apparent uniformity,' but this he converts into an advantage. His penetrating eye is infinitely delighted with the picturesque appearance of so many imperceptible deviations from a right line, and mathematical inclinations from the perpendicular. The picture of the Flamborough Family, painted with each an orange in his hand, must have been a masterpiece of nice discrimination and graceful inflection. Upon this principle of going to work the wrong way, and of making something out of nothing, we must reverse all our rules of taste and common sense. No Comedy can be perfect till the *dramatis personæ* might be reversed without creating much confusion : or the ingredients of character ought to be so blended and poured repeatedly from one vessel into another that the difference would be perceptible only to the finest palate. Thus, if Molière had lived in the present day, he would not have drawn his Avare, his Tartuffe and his Misanthrope with those strong touches and violent contrasts which he has done, but with those delicate traits which are common to human nature in general, that is, his Miser without avarice, his Hypocrite without design, and his Misanthrope without disgust at the vices of mankind. Or instead of the heroines of his *School for Women* (Alithea and Miss Peggy, which Wycherley has contrived to make the English understand) we should have had two sentimental young ladies brought up much in the same way, with nice shades of difference, which we should have been hardly able to distinguish, subscribing to the same circulating library, reading the same novels and poems, one preferring Gertrude of Wyoming to The Lady of the Lake, and the other The Lady of the Lake to Gertrude of Wyoming, differing in their opinions on points of taste or systems of mineralogy, and delivering dissertations on the arts with Corinna of Italy.

Considering the difficulty of the task which by our author's own account is thus imposed upon modern writers, may we not suppose this very difficulty to have operated to deter them from the pursuit of dramatic excellence. But I suspect that your Correspondent has taken up his complaint of the deficiency of refined Comedy too hastily, and that he need not despair of finding some modelled upon his favourite principles. Guided by his theory he should have sought them out in their remote obscurity, and have obtruded them on the public eye. He might have formed a new era of criticism, and have claimed the same merit as Voltaire, when he discovered that the

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English had one good Tragedy, *Cato*. Your Correspondent, availing himself of the idea that frivolity, taste, and elegance are the same, might have shewn how much superior *The Heiress* of Burgoyne was to *The Confederacy* or *The Way of the World*, and the *Basil* of Miss Bailey to *Romeo and Juliet*. He would have found ample scope in the blooming desert for endless discoveries—of beauties of the most shadowy kind, of fancies ‘wan that hang the pensive head,’ of evanescent smiles, and sighs that breathe not, of delicacy that shrinks from the touch, and feebleness that scarce supports itself, an elaborate vacuity of all thought, and an artificial dearth of sense, spirit, wit and character ! I can assure your Correspondent, there has been no want of Comedies to his taste ; but the taste of the public was not so far advanced. It was found necessary to appeal to something more palpable : and so, in this interval of want of characters in real life, the actors amuse themselves with taking off one another.

But your Correspondent will have it that there are different degrees of refinement in wit and pleasantry, and he seems to suppose that the best of our old Comedies are no better than the coarse jests of a set of country clowns—a sort of *comedies bourgeoises*, compared with the admirable productions which might and ought to be written. Even our modern dramatists, he suspects, are not so familiar with high life as they ought to be. ‘They have not seen the Court, and if they have not seen the Court their manner must be damnable.’ Leaving him to settle this last point with the poetical Lords and Ladies of the present day, I am afraid he has himself fallen into the very error he complains of, and would degrade genteel Comedy from a high Court Lady into a literary prostitute. What does he mean by refinement ? Does he find none in Millamant, and her morning dreams, in Sir Roger de Coverly and his widow ? Did not Congreve, Wycherley, and Suckling approach tolerably near ‘the ring of mimic Statesmen, and their merry King ?’ Does he suppose that their fine ladies were mere rustics, because they did not compose metaphysical treatises, or their fine gentlemen inexperienced tyros, because they had not been initiated into the infinitely refined society of Paris and of Baron Grimm ? Is there no distinction between an Angelica and a Miss Prue, a Valentine, a Tattle, and a Ben ? Where in the annals of modern literature will he find anything more refined, more deliberate, more abstracted in vice than the Nobleman in Amelia ? Are not the compliments which Pope paid to his friends, to St. John, Murray, and Cornbury, equal in taste and elegance to those which passed between the French philosophers and their patrons ?—Are there no traits in Sterne ?—Is not Richardson minute enough ?—Must we part with Sophia Western and Clarissa for the loves of the plants and the triangles ?—The beauty of

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these writers in general was, that they gave every kind and gradation of character, and they did this, because their portraits were taken from life. They were true to nature, full of meaning, perfectly understood and executed in every part. Their coarseness was not mere vulgarity, their refinement was not a mere negation of precision. They refined *upon* characters, instead of refining them *away*. Their refinement consisted in working out the parts, not in leaving a vague outline. They painted human nature as it was, and as they saw it with individual character and circumstances, not human nature in general, abstracted from time, place and circumstance. Strength and refinement are so far from being incompatible, that they assist each other, as the hardest bodies admit of the finest touches and the brightest polish. But there are some minds that never understand any thing, but by a negation of its opposite. There is a strength without refinement, which is grossness, as there is a refinement without strength or effect, which is insipidity. Neither are grossness and refinement of manners inconsistent with each other in the same period. The grossness of one class adds to the refinement of another, by circumscribing it, by rendering the feeling more pointed and exquisite, by irritating our self-love, &c. There can be no great refinement of character where there is no distinction of persons. The character of a gentleman is a *relative term*. The diffusion of knowledge, of artificial and intellectual equality, tends to level this distinction, and to confound that nice perception and high sense of honour, which arises from conspicuousness of situation, and a perpetual attention to personal propriety and the claims of personal respect. Your Correspondent, I think, mistakes refinement of individual character for general knowledge and intellectual subtlety, with which it has little more to do than with the dexterity of a rope-dancer or juggler. The age of chivalry is gone with the improvements in the art of war, which superseded personal courage, and the character of a gentleman must disappear with those refinements in intellect which render the advantages of rank and situation common almost to any one. The bag-wig and sword followed the helmet and the spear, when these outward insignia no longer implied a real superiority, and were a distinction without a difference. Even the grossness of a state of mixed and various manners receives a degree of refinement from contrast and opposition, by being defined and implicated with circumstances. The Upholsterer in *The Tatler* is not a mere vulgar politician. His intense feeling of interest and curiosity about what does not at all concern him, displays itself in the smallest things, assumes the most eccentric forms, and the peculiarity of his absurdity masks itself under various shifts and evasions, which the same folly, when it becomes epidemic and universal

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as it has since done, would not have occasion to resort to. In general it is only in a state of mere barbarism or indiscriminate refinement that we are to look for extreme grossness or complete insipidity. Our modern dramatists indeed have happily contrived to unite both extremes. *Omne tulit punctum*. On a soft ground of sentiment they have daubed in the gross absurdities of modern manners void of character, have blended metaphysical waiting maids with jockey noblemen, and the humours of the four in hand club, and fill up the piece by some vile and illiberal caricature of particular individuals known in the town.

To return once more to your Correspondent, who condemns all this as much as I do. He is for refining Comedy into a pure intellectual abstraction, the shadow of a shade. Will he forgive me if I suggest, as an addition to his theory, that the drama in general might be constructed on the same abstruse and philosophical principles. As he imagines that the finest Comedies may be formed without individual character, so the deepest Tragedies might be composed without real passion. The slightest and most ridiculous distresses might be improved by the help of art and metaphysical aid, into the most affecting scenes. A young man might naturally be introduced as the hero of a philosophic drama, who had lost the gold medal for a prize poem; or a young lady, whose verses had been severely criticized in the reviews. Nothing could come amiss to this rage for speculative refinement; or the actors might be supposed to come forward, not in any character, but as a sort of Chorus, reciting speeches on the general miseries of human life, or reading alternately a passage out of Seneca's *Morals* or Voltaire's *Candide*. This might by some be thought a great improvement on English Tragedy, or even on the French.

In fact, Sir, the whole of our author's reasoning proceeds on a total misconception of the nature of the Drama itself. It confounds philosophy with poetry, laboured analysis with intuitive perception, general truth with individual observation. He makes the comic muse a dealer in riddles, and an expounder of hieroglyphics, and a taste for dramatic excellence, a species of the second sight. He would have the Drama to be the most remote, and it is the most substantial and real of all things. It represents not only looks, but motion and speech. The painter gives only the former, looks without action or speech, and the mere writer only the latter, words without looks or action, Its business and its use is to express the thoughts and character in the most striking and instantaneous manner, in the manner most like reality. It conveys them in all their truth and subtlety, but in all their force and with all possible effect. It brings them into action, obtrudes them on the sight, embodies them in habits, in gestures, in

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dress, in circumstances, and in speech. It renders every thing overt and ostensible, and presents human nature not in its elementary principles or by general reflections, but exhibits its essential quality in all their variety of combination, and furnishes subjects for perpetual reflection.

But the instant we begin to refine and generalise beyond a certain point, we are reduced to abstraction, and compelled to see things, not as individuals, or as connected with action and circumstances, but as universal truths, applicable in a degree to all things, and in their extent to none, which therefore it would be absurd to predicate of individuals, or to represent to the senses. The habit, too, of detaching these abstract species and fragments of nature, destroys the power of combining them in complex characters, in every degree of force and variety. The concrete and the abstract cannot co-exist in the same mind. We accordingly find, that to genuine comedy succeed satire and novels, the one dealing in general character and description, and the other making out particulars by the assistance of narrative and comment. Afterwards come traits, and collections of anecdotes, bon mots, topics, and quotations, &c. which are applicable to any one, and are just as good told of one person as another. Thus the trio in the Memoirs of M. Grimm, attributed to three celebrated characters, on the death of a fourth, might have the names reversed, and would lose nothing of its effect. In general these traits, which are so much admired, are a sort of systematic libels on human nature, which make up, by their malice and *acuteness*, for their want of wit and sense.

I have already taken notice of the quotation from Madame de Staël, with which your Correspondent concludes. I can only oppose to it the authority of Sterne and Sir Richard Steele, who thought that the excellence of the English in comedy was in a great measure owing to the originality and variety of character among them [See *Sentimental Journey*, and *Tatler*, No. 42.] With respect to that extreme refinement of taste which the fair Author arrogates to the French, they are neither entirely without it, nor have they so much as they think. The two most refined things in the world are the story of the Falcon in Boccacio, and the character of Griselda in Chaucer, of neither of which the French would have the smallest conception, because they do not depend on traits, or minute circumstances, or turns of expression, but on infinite simplicity and truth, and an everlasting sentiment. We might retort upon Madame de Staël what she sometimes says in her own defence, That we understand all in other writers that is worth understanding. As to Molière, he is quite out of the present question; he lived long before the era of French philosophy and refinement, and is

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besides almost an English author, quite a *barbare*, in all in which he excels. He was unquestionably one of the greatest comic geniuses that ever lived, a man of infinite wit, gaiety, and invention, full of life and laughter, the very soul of mirth and whim. But it cannot be denied, that his plays are in general mere farces, without real nature or refined character, totally void of probability. They could not be carried on a moment without a perfect collusion between the parties, to wink at impossibilities, by contradicting and acting in defiance of all common sense. For instance, take the *Medecin malgre lui*, in which a common wood-cutter voluntarily takes upon himself, and supports through a long play, the character of a learned physician, without exciting the least suspicion, but which is, notwithstanding the absurdity of the plot, one of the most laughable and truly comic things that can be imagined. The rest of his lighter pieces are of the same description—mere gratuitous fictions and exaggerations of nature. As to his serious Comedies, as the *Tartuffe* and *Misanthrope*, nothing can be more objectionable, and the chief objection to them is that nothing is more hard than to read them through. They have all the improbability and extravagance of the rest, united with all the tedious common-place prosing of French declamation. What can exceed the absurdity of the *Misanthrope*, who leaves his mistress after every proof of her attachment and constancy, merely because she will not submit to the *technical formality* of going to live with him in a desert? The characters which she gives of her friends in the beginning of the play are very admirable satires, but not Comedy. The same remarks apply in a greater degree to the *Tartuffe*. The long speeches and reasonings in this Play may be very good logic, or rhetoric, or philosophy, or any thing but Comedy. They are dull pompous casuistry. The improbability is monstrous. This play is indeed invaluable, as a lasting monument of the credulity of the French to all verbal professions of virtue or wisdom, and its existence can only be accounted for from that astonishing and tyrannical predominance which words exercise over things in the mind of every Frenchman.

In short, Sir, I conceive, that neither Madame de Staël nor your Correspondent has hit upon the true theory of refinement. To suppose that we can go on refining for ever with vivacity and effect, embodying vague abstractions, and particularising flimsy generalities,—‘shewing the very body of the age, its form and pressure,’ though it has neither form nor pressure left,—seems to me the height of speculative absurdity. That undefined ‘frivolous space,’ beyond which Madame de Staël regards as ‘the region of taste and elegance,’ is, indeed, nothing but the very Limbo of Vanity, the land of chiromancy and occult conceit, and paradise of fools, where, according to your correspondent,



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'None yet, but store hereafter from the earth  
Shall, like aerial vapours, upward rise  
Of all things transitory and vain.'

I am, Sir, your humble servant, H.

## MADAME DE STAËL'S ACCOUNT OF GERMAN PHILOSOPHY AND LITERATURE

*The Morning Chronicle.*

*February 3, 1814.*

THE most interesting part of Madame de Staël's very ingenious and elegant work on Germany is undoubtedly (to literary readers) that in which she has sketched with so much intelligence and grace, the present state of opinions with respect to philosophy and taste in that country. I have not yet seen any satisfactory abstract of her reasonings on either of these subjects. The article in *The Edinburgh Review* touches but lightly and incidentally on them, from the variety and pressure of other topics of a more lively and general interest. I shall attempt to supply this deficiency, and at the same time to offer some farther thoughts on each subject. The two points on which I wish to enlarge are the view which Madame de Staël takes of German poetry, as contrasted with the French, and secondly of the spirit and principles of the German philosophy, that of Professor Kant, as opposed to the French system of philosophy which is not indeed peculiar to them as a nation, but common to the age. I shall begin with the last first, not only because it is perhaps the most important, but because I think that as the English were the first to propagate the latter system (for the French have only adopted it from us, carrying its practical and popular application farther), we ought not to be the last to disclaim and explode it. It may not be uninteresting as a branch of national literature, to take a general view of the rise and progress of their philosophy, before we come to examine Madame de Staël's account of the system which Kant has opposed to it, and to shew in what that system is well founded, and where it fails.

According to the prevailing system,—I mean the material or modern philosophy, as it has been called, all thought is to be resolved into sensation, all morality into the love of pleasure, and all action into mechanical impulse. These three propositions taken together, embrace almost every question relating to the human mind, and in their different ramifications and intersections form a net, not unlike that used by the enchanters of old, which, whosoever has once thrown over him, will find all farther efforts vain, and his attempts to reason freely on any

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subject in which his own nature is concerned, baffled and confounded in every direction.

This system, which first rose at the suggestion of Lord Bacon, on the ruins of the school-philosophy, has been gradually growing up to its present height ever since, from a wrong interpretation of the word *experience*, confining it to a knowledge of things without us; whereas it in fact includes all knowledge, relating to objects either within or out of the mind, of which we have any direct and positive evidence. We only know that we ourselves exist, the most certain of all truths, from the experience of what passes within ourselves. Strictly speaking, all other facts of which we are not immediately conscious, are such in a secondary and subordinate sense only. Physical experience is indeed the foundation and the test of that part of philosophy which relates to physical objects: farther, physical analogy is the only rule by which we can extend and apply our immediate knowledge, or infer the effects to be produced by the different objects around us. But to say that physical experiment is either the test, or source, or guide of that other part of philosophy which relates to our internal perceptions, that we are to look in external nature for the form, the substance, the colour, the very life and being of whatever exists in our minds, or that we can only infer the laws which regulate the phenomena of the mind from those which regulate the phenomena of matter, is to confound two things entirely distinct. Our knowledge of mental phenomena from consciousness, reflection, or observation of their correspondent signs in others is the true basis of metaphysical inquiry, as the knowledge of *facts*, commonly so called, is the only solid basis of natural philosophy. To assert that the operations of the mind and the operations of matter are in reality the same, so that we should always regard the one as symbols or exponents of the other, is to assume the very point in dispute, not only without any evidence, but in defiance of every appearance to the contrary.

Lord Bacon was undoubtedly a great man, indeed one of the greatest that have adorned this or any other country. He was a man of a clear and active spirit, of a most fertile genius, of vast designs, of general knowledge, and of profound wisdom. He united the powers of imagination and understanding in a greater degree than almost any other writer. He was one of the most remarkable instances of those men, who, by the rare privilege of their nature, are at once poets and philosophers, and see equally in both worlds—the individual and sensible, and the abstracted and intelligible forms of things. The Schoolmen and their followers attended to nothing but names, to essences and species, to laboured analyses and artificial deductions. They seem to have alike disregarded all kinds of experience, whether

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relating to external objects, or to the observation of our own internal feelings. From the imperfect state of knowledge, they had not a sufficient number of facts to guide them in their experimental researches; and intoxicated with the novelty of their vain distinctions, learnt by rote, they were tempted to despise the clearest and most obvious suggestions of their own minds. Subtle, restless, and self-sufficient, they thought that truth was only made to be disputed about, and existed no where but in their demonstrations and syllogisms. Hence arose their 'logomachies'—their everlasting word-fights, their sharp debates, their captious, bootless controversies. As Lord Bacon expresses it, 'they were made fierce with dark keeping,' signifying that their angry and unintelligible contests with one another were owing to their not having any distinct objects to engage their attention. They built altogether on their own whims and fancies; and, buoyed up by their specific levity, they mounted in their airy disputations in endless flights and circles, clamouring like birds of prey, till they equally lost sight of truth and nature. This great man, therefore, intended an essential service to philosophy, in wishing to recall the attention to facts and experience which had been almost entirely neglected; and thus, by incorporating the abstract with the concrete, and general reasoning with individual observation, to give to our conclusions that solidity and firmness which they must otherwise always want. He did nothing but insist on the necessity of experience, more particularly in natural science; and from the wider field that is open to it there, as well as the prodigious success it has met with, this latter application of the word, in which it is tantamount to physical experiment, has so far engrossed the whole of our attention, that mind has, for a good while past, been in some danger of being overlaid by matter. We run from one error into another, and as we were wrong at first, so in altering our course, we have passed into the opposite extreme. We despised experience altogether before: now we would have nothing but experience, and that of the grossest kind. We have, it is true, gained much by not consulting the suggestions of our own minds in questions where they inform us of nothing, namely, on the particular laws and phenomena of the material world; and we have hastily concluded (reversing the rule) that the best way to arrive at the knowledge of ourselves also, was to lay aside the dictates of our own consciousness, thoughts, and feelings, as deceitful and insufficient guides, though they are the only means by which we can obtain the least light upon the subject. We seem to have resigned the natural use of our understandings, and to have given up our own existence as a nonentity. We look for our thoughts and the distinguishing properties of our minds in some image of them in matter as we look to see our

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faces in a glass. We no longer decide physical problems by logical dilemmas, but we decide questions of logic by the evidence of the senses. Instead of putting our reason and invention to the rack indifferently on all questions, whether we have any previous knowledge of them or not, we have adopted the easier method of suspending the use of our faculties altogether, and settling tedious controversies by means of 'four champions fierce—hot, cold, moist and dry,' who with a few more of the retainers and hangers on of matter determine all questions relating to the nature of man and the limits of the human understanding very learnedly. But the laws by which we think, feel, and act, we must discover in the mind itself, or not at all.

This original bias in favour of mechanical reasoning and physical analogy was confirmed by the powerful aid of Hobbes, who was, indeed, the father of the modern philosophy. His strong mind and body appear to have resisted all impressions, but those which were derived from the downright blows of matter: all his ideas seemed to lie like substances in his brain: what was not a solid, tangible, distinct, palpable object, was to him nothing. The external image pressed so close upon his mind that it destroyed the power of consciousness, and left no room for attention to any thing but itself. He was by nature a materialist. Locke assisted greatly in giving popularity to the same scheme, as well by espousing the chief of Hobbes's metaphysical principles as by the doubtful resistance which he made to the rest. And it has been perfected and has received its last polish and roundness in the hands of some French philosophers, as Condillac and others.

The modern metaphysical system assumes as its basis that the operations of the intellect are only a continuation of the impulses existing in matter; or that all the thoughts and conceptions of the mind are nothing more than various modifications of the original impressions of things on a being endued with sensation or simple perception. This system considers ideas merely as they are caused by outward impressions acting on the organs of sense, and excludes the understanding as a distinct faculty or power from all share in its own operations.

The following is a summary of the general principles of this philosophy as they are expressly laid down by Hobbes, and by the latest writers of the French school.

1. That our *ideas* are copies of the impressions made by external objects on the senses.
2. That as nothing exists out of the mind but matter and motion so it is itself with all its operations nothing but matter and motion.

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3. That thoughts are single, or that we can think of only one object at a time.

4. That we have no general nor abstract ideas.

5. That the only principle of connection between one thought and another is association, or their previous connection in sense.

6. That reason and understanding depend entirely on the mechanism of language.

7 and 8. That the sense of pleasure and pain is the sole spring of action, and self-interest the source and centre of all our affections.

9. That the mind acts from a mechanical or physical necessity, over which it has no controul, and consequently is not a moral or accountable agent.—*The manner of reasoning upon this last question is the only circumstance of importance in which Hobbes differs decidedly from modern writers.*

10. That there is no difference in the natural capacities of men, the mind being originally passive to all impressions alike, and becoming whatever it is from circumstances.

Except the first, all of these positions are either denied or doubtfully admitted by Mr. Locke. It is, however, his admission of the first principle, which has opened a door directly or indirectly to all the rest. The system of Kant is a formal and elaborate antithesis to that which bears the name of Locke, and it is built on 'the sublime restriction (as Madame de Staël expresses it) added by Leibnitz to the well-known axiom *nihil in intellectu quod non prius in sensu*—NISI INTELLECTUS IPSE.'

It is in the manner of proving this restriction, and of explaining this word, *the intellect*, that the whole question depends, and to this I shall devote another letter.

AN ENGLISH METAPHYSICIAN.

## THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

*The Morning Chronicle.*

February 17, 1814.

THE principle that *all the ideas, operations, and faculties of the mind may be traced to, and ultimately accounted for, from simple sensation*, is all that remains of Mr. Locke's celebrated Essay, and that to which it owes its present rank among philosophical productions. His various attempts to modify this principle, or reconcile it to common notions have been gradually exploded, and have given place, one by one, to the more severe and logical deductions of Hobbes from the same general principle. Mr. Locke took the faculties of the mind as

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he found them in himself and others, and instead of levelling the structure, was contented to place it on a new foundation. By this compromise with prudence and candour, he prepared the way for the introduction of the principle, which being once established, very soon overturned all the trite opinions, and vulgar prejudices, which had been improperly associated with it. There was, in fact, no place for them in the new system. I confess it strikes some degree of awe into the mind, and makes it feel, that fame, even the best, is not a substantial thing, but the uncertain shadow of real excellence, when we reflect that the immortal renown, which attends the name of Locke as the great luminary of the age in which he lived, is but a dim and borrowed lustre from the writings of one, whom he himself calls, and who has been universally considered as 'a justly decried author.' The sentence of the poet is as applicable here as it ever was—

'Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,  
Nor in the glistening foil  
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies;  
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,  
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove !'

The great defect with which the *Essay on Human Understanding* is chargeable, is that there really is not a word about the understanding in it, nor any attempt to shew what it is, or whether it is, or is not any thing, distinct from the faculty of simple perception. The operations of thinking, comparing, discerning, reasoning, willing, and the like, which Mr. Locke generally ascribes to it, are the operations of nothing, or of we know not what. All the force of his mind seems to have been so bent on exploding innate ideas, and tracing our thoughts to their external source, that he either forgot, or had not leisure to examine what the internal principle of all thought is. He took for his basis a bad simile, namely, that the mind is like a blank sheet of paper, originally void of all characters, and merely passive to the impressions made upon it: for this, though true as far as relates to innate ideas, that is, to any impressions previously existing in the mind, is not true of the mind itself, or of the manner in which it forms its ideas of the objects actually impressed upon it. The obvious tendency of this simile was to convert the understanding into the mere passive receiver and retainer of physical impressions, a convenient repository for the straggling images of things, or a sort of empty room into which ideas are conveyed from without through the doors of the senses, as you would carry goods into an unfurnished lodging. And hence, again, it has been found necessary, by subsequent writers, to get rid of those different faculties and operations, which Mr. Locke elsewhere supposes to belong to the mind, but which are in truth only

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compatible with the active powers, and independent nature of the mind itself. It was to remedy this deficiency that Leibnitz proposed to add to the maxim of Locke, *that there is nothing in the understanding which was not before in the senses*—‘that sublime restriction,’ so much applauded by Madame de Staël—‘EXCEPT THE UNDERSTANDING ITSELF :’ and it is to the establishment and development of this distinction, that the whole of the Kantian philosophy appears to be directed. In what manner, and in what success (judging from the representations we have received of it) remains to be shewn.

The account which Madame de Staël has given of this system is full of the graces of imagination and the charm of sentiment : it passes slightly over many of the difficulties, and softens the abruptness of the reasoning by the harmony of the style. It is therefore the most popular and pleasing account which has been given of the system of the German Philosopher : but after all, it will be better to take his own statement, though somewhat ‘harsh and crabbed’ as the most tangible, authentic, and satisfactory.

‘The following,’ says his translator Willich, ‘are the elements of his *Critique of pure Reason*, the first of Kant’s systematical works, and the most remarkable for profound reasoning and the striking illustrations, with which it throughout abounds.

‘We are in possession of certain notions *à priori*<sup>1</sup> which are absolutely independent of all experience, although the objects of experience correspond with them, and which are distinguished by necessity, and strict universality. To these are opposed empirical notions, or such as are only possible *à posteriori*, that is, through experience. Besides these, we have certain notions, with which no objects of experience ever correspond, which rise above the world of sense, and which we consider as the most sublime, such as God, liberty, immortality. There is always supposed in every empirical notion, or impression of external objects, a pure perception *à priori*, a form of the sensitive faculty, *viz.* space and time. This form first

<sup>1</sup> This, if the translation is correct, is proving a great deal more than Leibnitz’s restriction of Locke’s doctrine requires, and is, as it appears to me, the great stumbling block in Kant’s Philosophy. It is quite enough to shew, not that there are certain notions *à priori* or independent of sensation, but certain faculties independent of the senses or sensible objects, which are the intellect itself, and necessary, after the objects are given, to form *ideas* of them. That is to say, ideas are the result of the action of objects on such and such faculties of the mind. Kant’s notions *à priori*, seem little better than the innate ideas of the schools, or the Platonic ideas or forms, which are to me the forms of *nothing*. The sole and simple question is, whether there are not certain intellectual faculties distinct from the senses, which exist before any ideas can be formed, as it is not denied by any one, that there are certain sensitive faculties which must exist before any sensations can be received. The one supposition no more implies innate ideas, than the other implies innate sensations.

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renders every actual appearance of objects possible. By the sensitive faculty we are able to form perceptions; by the understanding we form general ideas. By the sensitive faculty we experience impressions, and objects are given to us; by the understanding we bring representations of these objects before us: we think of them. Perceptions and general ideas are the elements of all our knowledge. Without the sensitive faculty, no object could be given (proposed to) us; without the understanding none would be thought of by us. These two powers are really distinct from one another; but neither of the two without the other can produce a *notion*. In order to obtain a distinct notion of any one thing, we must present to our general ideas objects in perception, and reduce our perceptions to, or connect them with, these general ideas. As the sensitive faculty has its determined forms, so has our understanding likewise forms *a priori*. These may be properly termed *categories*; they are pure ideas of the understanding, which relate, *a priori*, to the objects of perception in general. The objects of experience, therefore, are in no other way possible; they can in no other way be thought of by us, and their multiplied diversity can only be reduced to one act of judgment, or to one act of consciousness, by means of these categories of sense. Hence, the categories have objective reality. They are either categories of

1. *Quantity*, as unity, number, totality; or,
2. Of *Quality*, as reality, negation, limitation; or,
3. Of *Relation*, as substance and accident, cause and effect; or,
4. Of *Modality*, as possibility and impossibility, existence and non-existence, necessity and contingency.

‘The judgment is the capacity of applying the general ideas of the understanding to the information of experience. The objects of experience are regulated according to these ideas; and not, *vice versâ*, our ideas according to the objects.’

Such is the outline of this author’s account of the intellect, which, after all, appears to be rather dogmatical than demonstrative. He is much more intent on raising an extensive and magnificent fabric, than on laying the foundations. Each part does not rest upon its own separate basis, but, like the workmanship of some lofty arch, is supported and rivetted to its place by the weight and regular balance of the whole. Kant does not appear to trouble himself about the evidence of any particular proposition, but to rely on the conformity and mutual correspondence of the different parts of his general system, and its sufficiency, if admitted, to explain all the phenomena of the human intellect with consistency and accuracy;—in the same manner as the decypherer infers that he has found the true key of the



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hieroglyphic hand-writing, when he is able to solve every difficulty by it. However profound and comprehensive we may allow the views of human nature unfolded by this philosopher to be, his method is necessarily defective in simplicity, clearness, and force. His reasoning is seldom any thing more than a detailed, paraphrased explanation of his original statement, instead of being (what it ought to be) an appeal to known facts, or a deduction from acknowledged principles, or a detection of the inconsistencies of other writers. The extreme involution and technicality of his style proceed from the same source; that is, from the necessity of adapting a conventional language to the artificial and arbitrary arrangement of his ideas. The whole of Kant's system is evidently an elaborate antithesis or contradiction to the modern philosophy, and yet it is by no means a real approximation to popular opinion. Its chief object is to oppose certain fundamental principles to the *empirical* or mechanical philosophy, and it either rejects or explains away the more common and established notions, except so far as they coincide with the rigid theory of the author. He sets out with a preconceived hypothesis; and all other facts and opinions are made to bend to a predominant purpose.

The founder of the *transcendental* philosophy very properly insists on the distinction between the sensitive and the intellectual faculties, and makes this division the ground-work of his entire system. He considers the joint operation of these different powers as necessary to all our knowledge, and enumerates with scrupulous formality the different ideas which originate in this complex progress, and points out the share which each has in each. The author conceives of certain general ideas, as *substance* and *accident*, *cause* and *effect*, *totality*, *number*, *quantity*, *relation*, *possibility*, *necessity*, &c. as pure ideas of the understanding; and he classes *space* and *time* as primary forms of the sensitive faculty.<sup>1</sup> All this may be very true; but the proof may also be required, and it is not given. Yet modern metaphysicians are not likely, either as sceptical inquirers after truth, or as lovers of abstruse paradoxes, to be satisfied with the bare

<sup>1</sup> Now Kant, by thus classing, as he apparently does, the representations of space and time as forms of the sensitive faculty, throws up the whole argument: for if these very complex (not to say distracted) ideas, can be referred to mere sensation, I do not see why all the rest may not. Time is obviously an idea of succession or memory, and cannot be the result of an immediate sensible impression. The only power of the sensitive faculty is to receive blind, unconscious, unconnected impressions; the only category of the understanding is to perceive the *relations between these impressions*, so as to connect them consciously together, or to form ideas. To this category of relation, all the other general categories of quantity, totality, cause and effect, &c. as well as the ideas of space and time, are necessarily consequent and subordinate.

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assumption of a common prejudice. They will say, either that all these ideas have no real existence in the mind, that they are mere abstract terms which owe their force and validity to the mechanism of language; or admitting their existence in the mind, they will contend with Locke, that they are only general, reflex, and compound ideas, originally derived from sensation. 'Whence do all the ideas and operations of the mind proceed?' *From experience*, is the answer given by the modern philosophy—*From experience and from the understanding*, is the answer given by Kant. The former solution has the advantage of simplicity; and the logical proof is wanting to the latter. To compare grave things with gay, the display which this celebrated philosopher makes of his categories, his forms of the sensitive faculty, his pure ideas, and *a priori* principles, somewhat resembles the method taken by Sir Epicure Mammon in *The Alchymist* to persuade his sceptical friend that he is about to discover the philosopher's stone by overpowering his imagination with the description of the fine things he will do when he has it:—'And all this I will do with the stone.' 'But will all this give you the stone?' says Pertinax Surly, who 'will not believe antiquity' any more than our modern sceptics.

I think that the truth may be got at much more simply, and without all this parade of words. The business of the mind is twofold—to receive impressions and to perceive their relations; without which there can be no ideas. Now the first of these is the office of the senses, and is the only original function of the mind, according to the prevailing system. The second is properly the office of the understanding, and is that, the nature or existence of which is the great point in debate between the contending parties. The more complex and refined operations of this faculty, such as judging, reasoning, abstraction, willing, &c. are either totally denied, or at best resolved into simple ideas of sensation by modern metaphysical writers. I know of no better way, therefore, to establish the contrary hypothesis than to take these simple ideas of the moderns, and shew that they contain the same necessary principles of the understanding, the same operations of judging, comparing, distinguishing, abstracting, which they discard with so much profound contempt, or treat as accidental and artificial results of some higher faculty. If it can be proved that the understanding, in the strict and exclusive sense, is necessary to our having any *ideas* whatever,—that the very terms are synonymous and inseparable—that in the first original conception of the simplest object of nature there is implied the same principle, a power of perceiving the relations of different things, which is only exerted in a more perfect and comprehensive

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manner in the most complex and difficult processes of the human intellect, one would think that there must be an end of the question.  
AN ENGLISH METAPHYSICIAN.

### THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

*The Morning Chronicle.*

March 3, 1814.

'For men to have recourse to subtleties in raising difficulties, and then to complain that they should be taken off by minutely examining these subtleties, is a strange kind of proceeding.'

I CANNOT better explain the modern theory of the understanding (which it will be the object of this letter to consider) than in the words of one of the best and ablest commentators of that school, Mr. Horne Tooke.

'The business of the mind,' he says 'appears to me to be very simple. It extends no farther than to receive impressions, that is, to have sensations or feelings. What are called its operations are merely the operations of language. The greatest part of Mr. Locke's Essay, that is, all which relates to what he calls *the composition, abstraction, complexity, generalization, relation*, &c. of ideas, does indeed merely concern language. If he had been sooner aware of the inseparable connection between words and knowledge, he would not have talked of the composition of ideas, but would have seen that the only composition was in the terms, and consequently, that it was as improper to talk of a complex idea as of a complex star! I will venture to say that it is an easy matter, upon Mr. Locke's own principles and a physical consideration of the senses and the mind, to prove the impossibility of the composition of ideas, and that they are not ideas, but merely terms, which are general and abstract.'—*Diversions of Purley*, Vol. i. p. 39, 51, &c.<sup>1</sup>

Now this is very explicit, and, I also conceive, very logical. For I am ready to grant that 'Mr. Locke's own principles and a physical consideration of the mind' do lead to the conclusions here stated; and it is on that account that I shall attempt to shew that those principles and the consideration of the mind, as a physical thing, are in themselves absurd. These writers taking up the principle, that to have sensations or feelings was the only real faculty of the mind, and perceiving that the having sensations merely was a different thing from having an idea or consciousness of their relations (inasmuch as no

<sup>1</sup> See to the same purpose Hobbes's *Human Nature*, p. 25, and *Leviathan*, p. 14. Berkeley's *Principle of Human Knowledge*, p. 15 and 24. Hume's *Treatise*, p. 46. Helvetius on the Mind, p. 10, and Condillac's *Logic*, p. 54.

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sensation as such can include a knowledge of or reference to any other) have inferred very rationally that all the operations of the mind founded on a principle of general consciousness or common understanding, viz. *compounding, comparing, discerning, judging, reasoning, &c.* were excluded from their physical theory of sensation, and must be referred to some trick or deception of the mind, the mechanism of language or habitual association of ideas. According to this theory, besides the sensible impressions of individual objects, and their distinct traces left in the memory—the rest is merely words. In supposing that we combine these different impressions together, that we compare different objects, that we reason upon them, it seems we only deceive ourselves, and mistake a rapid and mechanical transition from one idea to another for the actual perception of the relations between them. Thus have these philosophers sacrificed all the known facts and conscious operations of the mind to a literal deduction from a gross verbal fallacy. For what are these single objects or individual ideas, of which the senses are competent to take cognizance, and beyond which the understanding can never advance a step? Neither more nor less than complex and general ideas, which imply all the same intellectual impossibilities of comparing, judging, distinguishing, &c. *i.e.*, of perceiving a number of diversified relations, of connecting the MANY into the ONE, which are objected to the more deliberate and formal acts of understanding and reason. The mind, say they, can perceive but one idea at a time, that is, it may perceive a square or a triangle, but it cannot compare them together, or perceive their proportions, because to do this, it must attend to different ideas at once. Yet what is this individual idea of a square, for instance, but an idea of given lines, their direction, equality, connection, &c. all which must be combined together in the mind, before it can possibly form any idea of the object? Mr. Tooke says, the complexity is in the term. I should say, the individuality is in the term, that is, in the application of one name to a collective idea, which superficial reasoners, at once the slaves of idle paradox and vulgar prejudice, have therefore imagined to be one thing. The whole error of this system has, indeed, arisen from considering ideas themselves, or those particular objects, which are marked by a single name, or strike at once, and in a mass, upon the senses, as simple things. But there is no one of these particular ideas, as they are called, which is not an aggregate of many things, or that can subsist for a moment but in the understanding. By destroying the composition of ideas, all ideas as well as all combinations of ideas, would be completely and for ever banished from the mind; which would be left a mere *tabula rasa*, a blank, indeed, or would at all times strictly resemble what Mr. Locke

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describes it to be in its original state, 'a dark closet with a little glimmering of light let in through the loop-holes of the senses.'

Writers, in general, who have maintained the existence of a distinct faculty besides the senses, have applied themselves to shew that, besides particular ideas or objects, it was necessary to admit the understanding to explain the perception of the relations between them. My purpose is to shew that the same perception of relation, the same understanding is implied in the very ideas of objects themselves. To have sensations is not to compare them, that is, sensation and understanding are not the same thing. To have ideas, it is necessary to compare our sensations, that is, ideas and understanding are the same thing.

I can conceive then of a being endued with the power of sensation, so as to receive the direct impressions of outward objects, and also with memory, so as to retain them for any length of time, as they were severally and unconnectedly presented, yet without any signs of understanding. The state of such a being would be that of animal life, and something more (with the addition of memory), but it would not amount to intellect. As this distinction is rather difficult to be explained, I hope I may be allowed to express it in any way I can, and without sacrificing to the graces. Suppose a number of animalculæ, as a heap of mites in a rotten cheese, lying as close together as they possibly can (though the example should be of something more 'drossy and divisible.' of something less reasonable, approaching nearer to pure sensation than we can conceive of any creature that exercises the functions of the meanest instinct). No one will contend that in this heap of living matter there is any idea or intimation of the number, position, or intricate involutions of that little, lively, restless tribe. This idea is evidently not contained in any of the parts separately, nor is it contained in all of them put together. That is, the aggregate of many actual sensations is, we here plainly see, a totally different thing from the collective idea, comprehension or consciousness of those sensations, as connected together into one whole, or of any of their relations to each other. We may go on multiplying sensations to the end of time, without ever advancing one step in the other process, or producing a single thought. But in what, I would ask, does this supposition differ from that of many distinct particles of matter, full of animation, tumbling about, and pressing against each other, in the same brain, except that we make use of this brain as a common medium to unite their different desultory actions in the same general principle of thought or consciousness—that is, understanding? Or, if this comparison should be thought not courtly enough, let us imagine one of Mrs. Salmon's full faced, comely wax-figures, sitting

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in its chair of state, to be suddenly endued with life and physical organisation but nothing more. Such an unaccountable *lusus naturæ* would answer exactly to the theory of modern metaphysicians, or would be capable of receiving feelings or impressions by its different organs, but would be totally void of any reflection upon them. It would be only a bloated mass of listless sensation, a sordid compound of proud flesh and irritable humours, a mere animal existence, a living automaton, crawling all over with morbid feelings, but without the least ray of understanding, or any knowledge of itself or of the things around, incapable of consistency of character or purpose, of foresight, deliberation, sympathy, and of all that distinguishes human reason or dignifies human nature !

Besides actual, sensible impressions, I suppose that there is a common principle of thought, a superintending faculty, which alone perceives the relations of things and enables us to comprehend their connections, forms, and masses. This faculty is properly the understanding, and it is by means of this faculty that man indeed becomes a reasonable soul. Without this surrounding and forming power, we could never conceive the idea of any one object, as of a table or a chair, a blade of grass or a grain of sand. Every one of these includes a certain configuration, hardness, colour, size, &c., *i.e.*, impressions of different things, received by different senses, which must be put together by the understanding before they can be referred to any particular object, or considered as one idea. Without this faculty, all our ideas would be necessarily decomposed, and crumbled down into their original elements and fluxional parts. We could assuredly in this case never connect the different links in a chain of reasoning together, for the very links of which this chain must consist would be ground to powder. We could neither form any comparison between our ideas, nor have any ideas to compare. There would be an infinite divisibility in the impressions of the mind, as well as in the parts of material objects. Each separate impression must remain absolutely simple and distinct, unknown to and unconscious of the rest, shut up in the narrow cell of its own individuality. No two of these atomic impressions could ever club together to form even a sensible point, much less should we be able to arrive at any of the larger masses or nominal descriptions of things. The most that sensation could possibly do for us would be to furnish the mind with ideas of some of those which Mr. Locke calls the simple qualities of objects, as of colour or pressure, though not as a general notion or diffused feeling, for it is certain that no one impression could ever contain more than the tinge of a single ray of light, or the puncture of a single particle of matter. Perhaps we might in this way be supposed to possess an infinite

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number of microscopic impressions and fractions of ideas, but there being nothing to arrange or bind them together, the whole would present only a disjointed mass of blind, unconscious confusion. All nature, all objects, all parts of all objects, would be equally 'without form and void.' *The mind alone is formative*, to use the expression of Kant; or it is that which by its pervading and elastic energy unfolds and expands our ideas, that gives order and consistency to them, that assigns to every part its proper place, and fixes it there, and that frames the idea of the whole. Or in other words, it is the understanding alone that perceives relation, but every object is made up of a bundle of relations. In short, there is no object or idea which does not consist of a number of parts arranged in a certain manner, but of this arrangement the parts themselves cannot be sensible. To make each part conscious of its relation to all the rest is to suppose an infinite number of intellects instead of one; and to say that a knowledge or perception of each part separately *without* a reference to the rest can produce a conception of the whole, is a contradiction in terms.

Ideas then are the offspring of the understanding, not of the senses. An idea necessarily implies, not only a number of distinct positive impressions, but some bond of union between them, some internal conscious principle to which they are alike communicated, and which grasps, overlooks, and comprehends the whole. The idea of a square, for example, is not the same thing with the compound impression made by the figure on the senses. For the immediate impression of any one of the sides cannot, as a mere sensation, be accompanied with an additional knowledge or reflex image of the remaining three sides, but is a perfectly distinct physical thing; neither can the actual co-existence of all these impressions be accompanied with a consciousness of their mutual relations to each other, *i.e.*, with an idea of the whole, without supposing some general representative faculty, to which these distinct impressions are referred.

Otherwise, different impressions made on the same organised or sentient being would no more produce the slightest continuity of thought or idea of the same object than different physical impressions conveyed to different organised beings would produce an immediate consciousness of these different objects or of the relations between them. If to have sensations were the same thing as to compare them, then different persons seeing different objects might without any communication make an exact comparison between them. If to have the sensible impression of the different parts of an object were the same thing as to form an idea of it, then different persons looking at the two halves of any object would be able to compound an idea of

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the whole between them, though each of them was perfectly unconscious of what was passing in the other's mind. Unless we suppose some faculty of this sort which opens a direct communication between our perceptions, so that the same thinking principle is at the same time cognisant of different impressions, and of their relations to each other, it seems a thing impossible to conceive how any comparison can take place between different impressions existing at the same time, or between our past and present impressions, or ever to explain what is meant by saying, '*I perceive such and such objects, I remember such and such events,*' since these different impressions are evidently referred to the same conscious being, which very idea of individuality could never have been so much as conceived of, if there were no other connection between our perceptions, than that which arises from the juxtaposition of the particles of matter on which they are actually impressed, or from 'a physical consideration of the senses and the mind.' The mind in this case consisting of nothing more than a succession of material points, each part would be sensible of the corresponding part of any object which might be impressed upon it, but could certainly know nothing of the impression which was made on any other part of the same organic substance, except by its communication to the same general principle of understanding. Ideas would exist in the mind, like tapestry figures or pictures in a gallery, without a spectator. On this hypothesis, I perfectly agree with Mr. Horne Tooke, that it would be as absurd to talk of a complex idea as of a complex star; for each impression or sensation must be as perfectly distinct from, and unconnected with the rest, as the stars that compose a constellation. One idea or impression would have no more connection with any other, than if it were parcel of another intellect, or floated in the region of the moon.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Lastly, that there is some one principle or substance, absolutely simple in its nature, and distinct from every composition of matter, which is the seat of thought, the soul of man, and the bond of our existence, will appear evident to any one who considers the nature of judgment and comparison: where both terms of the one, and both branches of the other must be apprehended together, in order to determine between them. Let one man be ever so well acquainted with St. Peter's at Rome, and another with St. Paul's in London, they can never tell which is the larger, the handsomer, or make any other comparison between the two buildings by virtue of this knowledge. But you will say, the one may communicate his knowledge to the other: but then that other has the idea of both before him in his imagination, and it is from this that he forms his judgment. Nor is the case different with respect to the parts of a percipient being: let the idea of an elephant be impressed upon particle *a*, and that of a mouse upon particle *b*, they can never know either jointly or separately which is the larger creature: nor can a judgment be formed till the ideas of both coincide in one and the same individual. This is the common sense of mankind. For



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It is strange that Mr. Locke should rank among simple ideas that of number, which he defines to be the idea of unity repeated. But how the impression of successive or distinct units should ever give the idea of repetition, unless the former instances are borne in mind, I have not the slightest conception. There might be an endless transition from one unit to another, but no addition made or ideal aggregate formed. As well might we suppose, that a body of an inch diameter, by shifting from place to place, may enlarge its dimensions to a foot or a mile, as that a succession of units, perceived separately, should produce the complex idea of multitude. On the mechanical hypothesis, the mind can receive or attend to but one impression at a time, and the idea of number would be too mighty for it. Though Mr. Locke constantly supposes the mind to perceive relations, and explains its common operations on this principle, there is but one place in his work in which he seems to have been upon the point of discovering that this principle lies at the foundation of, and is absolutely necessary to all our ideas whatever. He says, in the beginning of his chapter on Power, which he classes among simple ideas, 'I confess power includes in it *some kind of relation* (a relation to action or change), as, indeed, which of our ideas, of what kind soever, when attentively considered, does not? For our ideas of extension, duration, and number, do they not all contain in them a secret relation of the parts? Figure and motion have something relative in them much more visibly; and sensible qualities, as colours and smells, what are they but the powers of different bodies in relation to our perception? And if considered in the things themselves, do they not depend on the bulk, figure, texture, and motion of the parts? All which include some kind of relation in them. Our idea, therefore, of power, I think, may well have a place amongst other simple ideas, and be considered as one of them, being one of those that make a principal ingredient in our complex ideas of substances.'—*Essay on Human Understanding*, vol. i. p. 234.

That is to say, in other words, the idea of power, though confessedly complex, according to Mr. Locke, as depending on the changes we observe produced by one thing on another, is to

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when we make use of the pronouns, I, He, You, &c. and say, *I heard such a sound; I saw such a sight; or felt such a sensation*; are not these different impressions all referred by implication to the same simple individual? Or were I to say, that in looking at a chess-board for instance, one part of me saw the yellow king, another the black, another the queen, another the bishop, and so on, should I not be laughed at by every body as not knowing what I was talking about?—*Tucker's Light of Nature Pursued*, chapter on the Independent Existence of Mind. See also *Rousseau's reasoning in Answer to Helvetius*, *Emile*, tom. 3. And *Bentley's Sermons at the Boyle Lecture*.

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pass for a simple idea, because it has as good a right to this denomination as other complex ideas, which are usually classed as simple ones. It is thus that the inquiring mind seems to be always hovering on the brink of truth: but timidity, or indolence, or prejudice, makes us shrink back, unwilling to trust ourselves to the fathomless abyss.

I have thus given the best account which it is in my power to give of the understanding, as that conscious, comprehensive principle, which is the source not only of judgment and reasoning, but which is implied in every possible idea of the mind, or conception even of sensible objects. Every such object, it has been shewn, is made up of a number of individual impressions, yet how these perfectly detached, and desultory impressions should of themselves contain or produce a knowledge of their relations to each other, of their order, number, likeness, distances, limits, &c. by which alone they can be connected into one whole—without being first communicated to the same conscious principle of thought, to one diffusive, and yet self-centered intellect, one undivided active spirit, co-extended with the object, and yet ever present to itself, that

‘Thrills in each nerve, and lives along the line,’

it is difficult to imagine. There is no idea that is not evolved from this co-instantaneous power in the mind. The activity which Shakespeare ascribes to Ariel is not greater than that which is necessary to the production of the meanest thought. ‘Jove’s light’nings more momentary and sight-outrunning are not!’

AN ENGLISH METAPHYSICIAN.

### THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED (ON ABSTRACTION)

*The Morning Chronicle.*

*April 8, 1814.*

I AM aware that the long digression on the formation of our ideas, with which I troubled you in my last, will be looked upon as rhapsody and extravagance by the strictest sect of those who are called philosophers. The understanding has been set aside by these ingenious persons as an awkward incumbrance, since they conceived it practicable to carry on the whole business of thought and reason by a succession of individual images and sensible points. The fine network of the mind, the intellectual cords that bind and hold our scattered perceptions together, and form the living line of communication between them, are dissolved and vanish before the clear light of modern metaphysics, as the gossamer is dissipated by the sun. The adepts in this system smile at the contradictions involved in the supposition of perceiving the relations between different things, and

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say that the common theory of the understanding leads to the absurdity that the mind may attend to two ideas at once, which is with them impossible. What I have endeavoured to establish, is, that if the mind cannot have more than one idea at a time, it can never have any, since all the ideas we know of consist of more than one; and though the conviction we have of attending to different impressions at once, when we compare, distinguish, judge, reason, &c. has been gratuitously resolved into a deception of the mind, mistaking a rapid succession of objects for a joint conception of them, yet it will hardly be pretended that we deceive ourselves in thinking we have any ideas at all. Whether the advocates for this hypothesis will sit down contented under the total dissipation of all thought, the utter privation of all ideas, to which, by their own arguments, they will have reduced themselves, it remains for them to determine. We have seen that Mr. Tooke resolves the complexity of our ideas into the complexity of the terms made use of. How a term can be complex, otherwise than from the complexity of its meaning, that is, of the idea attached to it, is by no means easy to understand. Other writers, to avoid the seeming contradiction of supposing the mind to divide its attention between different objects, have suggested the instant of its passing from one to the other as the true point of comparison between them; or that the time when it had the idea of both together, was the time when it had an idea of neither. To such absurdities are ingenious men driven by setting up argument against fact, and denying the most obvious truths for which they cannot account, like the sophist who denied the existence of motion, because he could not understand its nature. It might perhaps be deemed a sufficient answer to those who build systems and lay down learned propositions on the principle that the mind can comprehend but one idea at a time, to say that they consequently can have no meaning in what they write, since when they begin a sentence, they cannot have the least idea what will be the end of it, and by the time they get there, must totally forget the beginning.—‘Peace to all such.’<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> So little has this principle of the unity of thought and consciousness been understood, that even Professor Stewart, the great champion of the intellectual philosophy, utterly rejects it, and supposes that the idea which the mind forms of any visible figure is nothing but a rapid succession of the ideas of the several parts. See his reasoning on this subject most ably confuted in a work lately published, entitled ‘An Essay on Consciousness by John Fearn.’—This Essay, in spite of the disadvantage of the mechanical hypothesis with which it is encumbered, and the technical obscurity of the style, contains, I think, more close and original observation on the individual processes of the human mind, than any work published in this country in the last fifty years.

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Mr. Horne Tooke justly complains of the uncertainty, confusion, and laxity of Mr. Locke's reasoning on the subject of abstract ideas, though I cannot agree with him that it is therefore 'very different from that incomparable author's usual method of proceeding.'—See Essay on Human Understanding, vol. ii. p. 15, &c.

I am quite at a loss to determine, from Mr. Locke's various statements, whether he really supposed the abstraction to be in the ideas, or merely in the terms. There is none of this wavering and perplexity in the minds of his French commentators, none of this suspicion of error, and anxious desire to correct it; no unforeseen objections arise to stagger their natural confidence in themselves; it is all the same light, airy, self-complacency, not a speck is seen to sully the clear sky of their philosophy, not a wrinkle disturbs the smooth and smiling current of their thoughts. In the Logic of the Abbé Condillac, that manual of the modern sciolist, the question of abstract ideas is settled and cleared from all difficulties, past, present, and to come, with as little expence of thought, time, and trouble, as possible. The Abbe demonstrates with ease.

'But what in truth,' he asks, 'is the reality which a general and abstract idea has in the mind? It is nothing but a name; or if it is any thing more, it necessarily ceases to be abstract and general. If in thinking of *a man* in general I contemplate anything in this word, besides the mere denomination, it can only be by representing to myself some one man; and a man can no more be a man in the abstract in my mind than in nature. Abstract ideas are therefore only denominations. This confirms what we have already demonstrated, how necessary words are to us; for if we had no general terms, we should have no abstract ideas; if we had no abstract ideas, we should have neither *genera* nor *species*; and without *genera* and *species*, we could reason upon nothing. To speak, to reason, to form general and abstract ideas, are then in fact the same thing; and this truth, simple as it is, might pass for a discovery. Certainly, men in general have not even had a notion of it.'—Logic, p. 136.

Now, in order to prevent these *genera* and *species*, and all rational ideas along with them, from being precipitated into the empty abyss of words prepared for them by these philosophers, it may be proper to ask one question, *viz.* if we have no idea of *genera* and *species*, or of what different things have in common or alike, that is, if the idea is nothing but the name, how is it that we know when to apply the same general name to different particulars, which on this principle can have nothing left to connect them in the mind? For example, take the words, *a white horse*. Now, say they, it is the terms which are general or common, but we have no general or abstract idea

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corresponding to them. But if we have no general idea of *white*, nor any general idea of *a horse*, what have we left to guide us in applying the phrase to any but the first horse, any more than in applying the terms of an unknown tongue to their respective objects? In short, what is it that 'puts the same common name into a capacity of signifying many particulars,' but that common nature or kind which is conceived to belong to them? Condillac says, that without general terms, there would be no general ideas; it appears to me, that without general ideas there could be no general terms. Language without this would be reduced to a heap of proper names, and we should be as completely at a loss to class any object generally from its agreement with others, or to say at sight, this is a man, this is a horse, as to know whether we should call the first man we accidentally met in the street by the name of John or Thomas. The very existence of language is alone a sufficient proof of the power of abstraction in the human mind.

It is so far from being true, according to the modern philosophy, that we have neither complex nor general ideas, that, I think, it may be proved to a demonstration that we have and can have no others. I must premise, however, that I do not believe it possible ever to arrive at general or abstract ideas by beginning in Mr. Locke's method with particular images. This faculty of abstraction is by most writers considered as a sort of artificial refinement upon our other ideas, as an excrescence no ways contained in the common impressions of things, nor necessary to the common purposes of life; and is by Mr. Locke altogether denied to be among the faculties of brutes. It is described as the ornament and top-addition of the mind of man, which proceeding from simple sensations upwards is gradually sublimed into the abstract notions of things:—

' So from the root  
Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves  
More airy, last the bright consummate flower.'

On the contrary, I conceive that all our notions, from first to last, are (strictly speaking) general and abstract, not absolute or particular; and that to have a perfectly distinct idea of any one individual object or concrete existence, either as to the parts of which it is composed, or the differences belonging to it, or the circumstances connected with it, would require an unlimited power of comprehension in the human mind, which is impossible. All particular things consist of, and even lead to, an infinite number of other things. Abstraction is therefore a necessary consequence of the limitation of the comprehensive faculty, and mixes itself, more or less, with every act of the understanding,

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of whatever kind, during every moment of its existence. The same fallacy has led to the rejection of abstract and general ideas which has led to the rejection of complex ones, *viz.* that of supposing sensible images to be perfectly simple or individual things. But the truth is, that there is no one idea of an individual object which is any thing more than a general and imperfect notion of it: for as there is no such idea which does not relate to a number of complicated impressions and their connections, so we can conceive the whole of no one object. Again, there is no idea of a particular quality of any object, which is perfectly simple and definite, but the result of a number of sensible impressions of the same sort, classed together by the mind under the abstract notion of likeness, or of something common between them, without attending to their difference in other respects.

This view of the subject is not, I confess, very obvious at first sight, and requires strong and clear proof, but it also admits of it. The only way to defend our common sense against the sophisms of the moderns is to retort their own analytical distinctions upon them.

In looking at any object, as at St. James's Palace, for example, it is taken for granted that the impression I have of it is a perfectly distinct, precise, and definite idea, in which abstraction or generalisation has no concern. Now it appears to me an easy matter to shew that this sensible image of a particular building is itself but a vague and confused notion, not one precise, individual impression, or any number of impressions, distinctly perceived. For I would demand of any one who thinks his senses furnish him with these infallible and perfect images of things, free from all contradiction and perplexity, what is the amount of the knowledge which he has of the object before him? For instance, is the knowledge which he has that St. James's Palace is larger than the houses which are near it, owing to his perceiving, with a glance of the eye, all the bricks of which the front is composed, or can he not tell that it contains a number of windows of different sizes, without distinctly counting them? Let us even suppose that he has this exact knowledge, yet this will not be enough unless he has also a distinct perception of the number and size of the panes of glass in each window, and of every mark, stain, or dent in each brick, otherwise, his idea of each of these particulars will still be general, and his most substantial knowledge built on shadows, that is, composed of a number of parts, of the parts of which he has no knowledge. In the same manner that I form an idea of St. James's Palace, I can form an idea of Pall-Mall, of the adjoining streets, of Westminster, and London, of Paris, of France, and

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England, and of the different cities and kingdoms of the world. At least, I do not see the point of separation in this progressive scale of our ideas. May I not be able, in looking out of my window, to distinguish, first, a certain object in the distance, then that it is a man, then that it is a person whom I know, and all this before I can distinguish his particular features; and after I can distinguish those features, what do I know or see of them, except their general form, expression, and effect? Little or nothing. Let any one, who is not an artist, or let any one who is, attempt to give an outline from memory of the features of his most intimate friend, and he will feel the truth of this remark. Yet though he does not know the exact turn of any one feature, he will instantly, and without fail, recognise the person the moment he meets him in the street, and that often, merely from catching a glimpse of some part of his dress, or from peculiarity of motion, though he may be quite at a loss to define in what this peculiarity consists, or to account for its impression on him. We may be said to have a particular knowledge of things, in proportion to the number of parts which we distinguish in them. But the real ultimate foundation of all our knowledge is and must be general, that is, made up of masses, not of points, a mere confused result of a number of impressions, not analysed by the mind, since there is no object which does not consist of an infinite number of parts, and we have not an infinite number of distinct ideas, answering to them. The knowledge of every finite being rests in generals, and if we think to exclude all generality from our ideas of things, as implying a want of perfect truth and clearness, it will be impossible for the mind to form an idea of any one object whatever. Let any person try the experiment of counting a flock of sheep driven fast by him, and he will soon find his imagination unable to keep pace with the rapid succession of objects, and his idea of a positive number slide into the general notion of multitude. But because there are more objects passing before him than he can possibly count, he will not, therefore, think that there are none, nor will the word, *flock*, present to his mind a mere name without any idea corresponding to it. Every act of the attention, every object we see or think of, offers a proof of the same kind.

These remarks will be found to contain the answer to the common argument used on this subject, that in thinking of a man in general, we must always conceive of a man of a particular size and figure. Now if it be meant that when we pronounce the word *man*, we have either no idea at all, or a distinct and perfect one of an entire figure of a man with all its parts and proportions, it would amount to a knowledge, which no sculptor or painter ever had of any one figure

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of which he was the most thorough master, and which he had immediately before him. Or if it be only meant that we think of a particular height, which must be a precise, positive, determinate idea, even this supposition may in the same way be shewn to be exceedingly fallacious, and an inversion of the natural order of our ideas. For take any given height of a man, whether tall, short, or middle-sized, and let that height be as visible as you please, yet the actual height to which it amounts must be made up of the length of the different parts, the head, the face, the neck, the body, limbs, &c. all which must be distinctly added together by the mind, before the sum total which they compose can be pretended to be a precise, definite, individual idea. In the impression then of a given visible object, we have only a general idea of something more or less extended, and never of the precise length itself, for this precise length (as it is thought to be) is necessarily composed of a number of subordinate lengths, too many and too minute to be separately attended to, or jointly conceived by the mind, and at last loses itself in the infinite divisibility of matter. What sort of absolute certainty can therefore be found in any such image or ideas, I cannot well conceive: it seems to me like seeking for distinctness in the dancing of insects in the evening sun, or for fixedness and rest in the motion of the sea. All particulars are nothing but generals, more or less defined according to circumstances, but never perfectly so.

Lastly, as the ideas of sensible objects can only be general notions, so the ideas of sensible qualities are properly abstract ideas of likeness or of something common between a number of sensible impressions of the same class or sort. For example, the idea I have of the whiteness of a marble statue is not the idea of a point, nor of any number of points, with all their differences and circumstances, but a relative idea of the colour of the whole statue. Now in arriving at this general result, or in classing its sensible impressions together as of the same sort or quality, the mind certainly is not conscious of every stain in the colour of the marble, or streak that may happen to vary it, or of its shape or size, or of every difference of light and shade, arising from inequality of surface, &c. Yet if the idea falls any thing short of this minute and absolute knowledge, it can only be an imperfect and abstract one. The idea of whiteness in the same object (or as a sensible quality) necessarily implies the same power of *abstracting from particulars* in the mind, as the general idea of whiteness taken from different objects, from a white horse, a white cloud, a white wall, a white lily, or from all the other white objects I have ever seen. The precise differences of form, size, and every other actual circumstance in these particular images, are as little necessary to be



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attended to in forming the general idea of whiteness, as the differences of shape, size, and colour in every particle of the statue of white marble are to the general impression of colour in the whole object.

I will only add, that the mind has not been fairly dealt with in this and other questions of the same sort. The difficulties belonging to the abstraction, complexity, generalisation, &c. of our ideas, it is, perhaps, impossible ever to clear up; but that is no reason why we should discard these operations from the human mind, any more than we should deny the existence of emotion, of extension, or of curve lines, because we cannot explain them. Matter alone seems to have the privilege of presenting difficulties and contradictions at every turn, which pass current under the name of *facts*: but the moment any thing of this kind is observed in the understanding, all the petulance of logicians is up in arms against it. The mind is made the mark on which they vent all the moods and figures of their impertinence; and metaphysical truth has in this respect, fared like the milk-white hind, the emblem of pure faith, in Dryden's fable, which 'had oft been chased—

With Scythian shafts, and many winged wounds  
Aimed at her heart, was often forced to fly,  
And doomed to death, though fated not to die.'

AN ENGLISH METAPHYSICIAN.

## ON ROCHEFOUCAULT'S MAXIMS

*The Examiner.*

October 23, 1814.

THE celebrated maxims of Rochefoucault contain a good deal of truth mixed up with more falsehood. They might in general be easily reversed. The whole artifice of the author consists in availing himself of the *mixed* nature of motives, so as to detect some indirect or sinister bias even in the best, and he then proceeds to argue as if they were *simple*, that is, had but one principle, and that principle the worst. By the same extreme mode of reasoning which he adopts, that is, by taking the exception for the rule, it might be shewn that there is no such thing as selfishness, pride, vanity, revenge, envy, &c. in our nature, with quite as much plausibility as he has attempted to shew that there is no such thing as love, friendship, gratitude, generosity, or true benevolence. If the slightest associated circumstance, or latent impulse connected with our actions, is to be magnified into the whole motive, merely by the microscopic acuteness which discovered it, why not complete the paradox, by resolving our vices

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into some pretence to virtue, which almost always accompanies and qualifies them? Or is it to be taken for granted that our vices are sincere, and our virtues only hypocrisy and affectation? Shakespeare has given a much simpler and better account of the matter, when he says, 'The web of our life is of a mingled yarn: our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not; and our vices would despair, if they were not cherished by our virtues.' The most favourable representations of human nature are not certainly the most popular. The character of Sir Charles Grandison is insipid compared with that of Lovelace, as Satan is the hero of *Paradise Lost*; and Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* is read with more interest and avidity than the *Practice of Piety* or Grove's *Ethics*. Whatever deviates from the plain path of duty, or contradicts received opinions, seems to imply a strength of will, or a strength of understanding, which seizes forcibly on the attention. Whether it is fortitude or cowardice, or both, there is a strong propensity in the human mind, if its suspicions are once raised, to *know the worst*. It is the same in speculation as in practice. When once the fairy dream in which we have lulled our senses or imagination is disturbed, we only feel ourselves secure from the delusions of self-love by distrusting appearances altogether, and revenge ourselves for the cheat which we think has been put upon us, by laughing at the credulity of those who are still its dupes.<sup>1</sup> Even the very love of virtue makes the mind proportionably impatient of every thing like doubt respecting it, and prompts us to escape from tormenting suspense in total indifference, as jealousy cures itself by destroying its object. The *Fable of the Bees*, the *Maxims of Rochefoucault*, the *Treatise on the Falsity of Human Virtues*, and the book *De l'Esprit* have owed much of their popularity to the consolation they afforded to disappointed hope. However this may be, a collection of amiable paradoxes on the other side of the question, would have but few readers. There would be less point and satire, though there would not be less truth nor, as far as the analytical process is concerned, less ingenuity, in exalting our bad qualities into virtues, than in debasing our good ones into vices. I will give an example or two of what I mean.

Thus, it might be argued that there is no such thing as envy: or that what is called by that name, does not (if strictly examined) arise from a hatred of real excellence, but from a suspicion that the

<sup>1</sup> 'And see! how dark the backward stream  
A little moment past how smiling!  
And still perhaps, with faithless gleam,  
Some other loiterer beguiling.'

Wordsworth.

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excellence is not real, or not so great as it is supposed to be, and consequently that the preference given to others is an act of injustice done to ourselves. For whenever all doubt is removed of the reality of the excellence, either from our own convictions, or from the concurrent opinion of mankind in general, envy ceases. This is the reason why the reputation of the dead never excites this passion, because it has been fully established by the most unequivocal testimony, it has received a sanction which fills the imagination and gains the assent at once, and the fame of the great men of past times is placed beyond the reach of envy, because it is placed beyond the reach of doubt. We feel no misgivings as to the solidity of their pretensions, nor any apprehension that our admiration or praise will be thrown away on what does not deserve it. No one envies Shakespeare or Rubens, because no one entertains the least doubt of their genius. We are as prodigal of our admiration of universally acknowledged excellence, making a sort of religious idolatry of it, as we are niggardly and cautious in fixing the stamp of our approbation on that which may turn out to be only counterfeit. It is not because we are competitors with the living and not with the dead: but because the claims of the one are fully established, and of the other not. Why else indeed are we competitors with the one and not with the other? Accordingly, where living merit is so clear as to bring immediate and entire conviction to the mind, we are no longer disposed to stint or withhold our applause, any more than to dispute the light of the sun. For instance, who ever felt the least difficulty in acknowledging the merits of Wilkie or Turner, merely because these artists are now living? If immediate celebrity has not always been the reward of extraordinary genius, this has been owing to the incapacity of the public to judge of the highest works of art. There is no want of instances where the popular opinion has outstripped the claims of justice, whenever the merits of the artist were on a level with the common understanding, and of an obvious character. Sir Joshua Reynolds had his full share of popularity in his life-time. Raphael Mengs was cried up by his countrymen and contemporaries as equal to Raphael; and Mr. West at present stands as high in the estimation of the public as he does in his own. On the other hand, and in opposition to what was said above (though the exception still confirms the rule), the French hate Shakespeare and Rubens, for no other reason than because there is nothing in their minds which really enables them to understand or relish either. The admiration which they hear others express of this great painter and greater poet, appears to them a delusion, an instance of false taste, and a bigoted preference of that which is full of faults to that—*which is without beauties.*

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The disputes and jealousies of different nations respecting each other's productions, arise chiefly from this source. We despise French painting, French poetry, and French philosophy, not because they are French, but because they appear to us to want the essential requisites of genius, feeling, and common sense. We do not feel any reluctance to admire Titian or Rembrandt, or Phidias or Homer, or Boccace or Cervantes, merely because they were not English. They speak the universal language of truth and nature. Our national and local prejudices for the most part operate only as a barrier against national and local absurdities. To the same purpose, I might mention some modern poets and critics who are actuated by nearly as intolerant feelings towards Pope and Dryden, as if they had been their contemporaries.<sup>1</sup> They are not their cotemporaries, but the explanation is obvious. From the want of congeniality of mind, and a taste for their peculiar excellences, the space which those writers occupy in the eyes of the world seems comparatively disproportionate to their merits; and hence the irritation and gall which follows. The highest reputation and the highest excellence almost always destroy envy; whereas, in the common supposition, we ought to feel the greatest envy, where there is the greatest superiority, and the greatest admiration of it in others. If we never become entirely free from it in modern works, it is because with respect to them we can never 'make assurance double sure,' by having our own feelings confirmed by the united voices of ages and nations. True genius and true fame seize our admiration, and our admiration, when once excited, becomes a passion, and we take a delight in exaggerating the excellences of our idol as if they were our own. On the contrary, we all envy that reputation which is acquired by trick or cunning, or by mere shewy accomplishments, as when with moderate talents, dexterously applied, or an appeal to ignorant credulity, a man 'gets the start of the majestic world,' and obtains the highest character for qualities which he does not possess. It becomes an imposture and an insult, which we resent as such.

The jealousy and uneasiness produced in the mind by a pedantic or dazzling display of useless accomplishments may be traced to a similar source. Hence the old objection, *materiam superabat opus*. True warmth and vigour communicate warmth and vigour: and we are no

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Southey is, it is hoped, politically reconciled to Mr. Dryden, since his succession to the Laureatship. Which of these two writers is the better poet, it would be presumptuous in us to determine. We could sooner determine which was the honestest man. Mr. Dryden, we believe, never wrote Regicide Sonnets, Jacobin Odes, or Revolutionary Epic Poems. How the Prince must laugh, if he can laugh at any thing. He might as well have made his chaplain his historical painter!

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longer inclined to dispute the inspiration of the oracle, when we feel the 'presens Divus' in our own bosoms. But when without gaining any new light or heat, we only find our ideas thrown into confusion and perplexity by an art that we cannot comprehend, this is a kind of superiority which must always be painful, and can never be cordially admitted. It is for this reason that the extraordinary talents of the late Mr. Pitt were always viewed, except by those of his own party, with a sort of jealousy, and grudgingly acknowledged: while those of his more popular rivals were admitted by all parties in the most unreserved manner, and carried by acclamation. Mr. Burke was scouted only by the common herd of politicians, who did not understand him. So on the stage, we imagine Mrs. Siddons could hardly have excited envy or jealousy in the breast of any person, not totally devoid of common sensibility: because her talents bore down all opposition, and filled the mind at once with delight and awe. Mr. Kean has a strong and most absurd party against him: but we will venture to say that if his figure, or his voice, or his judgment, were better, that is, if he had fewer defects, he would have fewer detractors from his excellencies. Any peculiar defects excite ridicule and enmity by bringing the whole claim to our applause into question. A perfect actor would not be an object of envy even to some newspaper critics. Perfect beauty excites this feeling less among women than half pretensions to it. In the same manner, upstart wealth or newly acquired honours produce contempt rather than respect, from not being accompanied with any strong or permanent associations of pleasure or power. There is nothing more apt to occasion the feeling of envy than the sudden and unexpected rise of persons we have long known under different circumstances, not from the immediate comparison with ourselves (the extravagant admiration of each other's talents among friends is an answer to this supposition) so much as from the disbelief of the reality of their pretensions, and our inability to overcome our previous prejudice against them. It is the same where striking mental inequalities exist, or where the moral properties render us averse to acknowledge merit of a different kind, or where the countenance or manner does not denote genius. Every such incongruity increases the difficulty of connecting hearty admiration with ideas so opposite to it. I have known artists whose physiognomy was so much against them, that no one would ever think highly of them, though they were to paint like Raphael; and I once heard a very sensible man say, that if Sir Isaac Newton had lisped, he could not have fancied him to be a great man. I myself have felt a jealousy of pretensions which I thought inferior to my own, but I never knew what envy of great talents was. I do not

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indeed like to be put down by persons I despise, or to seem to myself less than nothing. In a word, we feel the same jealousy and irritation at seeing others surpassed, whom we have been accustomed to admire; and what is more, grow jealous of our own approximation to an equality with them. Every ingenuous mind shrinks from a comparison of itself, with what it looks up to, and is ashamed of any advantage it may gain over those whom it regards as having higher powers and pretensions. The idea of fame is too pure and sacred to be mingled with our own. Our admiration of others is stronger than our vanity. Poor indeed is that mind which has no other idol but self. It is the want of all real imagination and enthusiasm, or that little glittering halo of personal conceit which surrounds every Frenchman, and does not suffer him to see or feel any thing beyond it, that makes the French perhaps the most contemptible people in the world.

## EDUCATION OF WOMEN

*The Examiner.*

February 12, 1815.

WE do not think a classical education proper for women. It may pervert their minds, but it cannot elevate them. It has been asked, Why a woman should not learn the dead languages as well as the modern ones? For this plain reason, that the one are still spoken, and have immediate associations connected with them, and the other not. A woman may have a lover who is a Frenchman, or an Italian, or a Spaniard; and it is well to be provided against every contingency in that way. But what possible interest can she feel in those old-fashioned persons, the Greeks and Romans, or in what was done two thousand years ago? A modern widow would doubtless prefer Signor Tramezzani to Æneas, and Mr. Conway would be a formidable rival to Paris. No young lady in our days, in conceiving an idea of Apollo, can go a step beyond the image of her favourite poet: nor do we wonder that our old friend, the Prince Regent, passes for a perfect Adonis in the circles of beauty and fashion. Women in general have no ideas, except personal ones. They are mere egotists. They have no passion for truth, nor any love of what is purely ideal. They hate to think, and they hate every one who seems to think of any thing but themselves. Everything is to them a perfect nonentity which does not touch their senses, their vanity, or their interest. Their poetry, their criticism, their politics, their morality, and their divinity, are downright affectation. That line in Milton is very striking—

‘He for God only, she for God in him.’

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Such is the order of nature and providence; and we should be sorry to see any fantastic improvements on it. Women are what they were meant to be; and we wish for no alteration in their bodies or their minds. They are the creatures of the circumstances in which they are placed, of sense, of sympathy and habit. They are exquisitely susceptible of the passive impressions of things: but to form an idea of pure understanding or imagination, to feel an interest in *the true* and *the good* beyond themselves, requires an effort of which they are incapable. They want principle, except that which consists in an adherence to established custom; and this is the reason of the severe laws which have been set up as a barrier against every infringement of decorum and propriety in women. It has been observed by an ingenious writer of the present day, that women want imagination. This requires explanation. They have less of that imagination which depends on intensity of passion, on the accumulation of ideas and feelings round one object, on bringing all nature and all art to bear on a particular purpose, on continuity and comprehension of mind; but for the same reason, they have more fancy, that is greater flexibility of mind, and can more readily vary and separate their ideas at pleasure. The reason of that greater presence of mind which has been remarked in women is, that they are less in the habit of speculating on what is best to be done, and the first suggestion is decisive. The writer of this article confesses that he never met with any woman who could reason, and with but one reasonable woman. There is no instance of a woman having been a great mathematician or metaphysician or poet or painter: but they can dance and sing and act and write novels and fall in love, which last quality alone makes more than angels of them. Women are no judges of the characters of men, except *as men*. They have no real respect for men, or they never respect them for those qualities, for which they are respected by men. They in fact regard all such qualities as interfering with their own pretensions, and creating a jurisdiction different from their own. Women naturally wish to have their favourites all to themselves, and flatter their weaknesses to make them more dependent on their own good opinion, which, they think, is all that they want. We have, indeed, seen instances of men, equally respectable and amiable, equally admired by the women and esteemed by the men, but who have been ruined by an excess of virtues and accomplishments.

## MIND AND MOTIVE

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*The Examiner.*

February 26, 1815.

‘The web of our lives is of a mingled yarn.’

‘ANTHONY CODRUS URCEUS, a most learned and unfortunate Italian, born 1446, was a striking instance’ (says his biographer) ‘of the miseries men bring upon themselves by setting their affections unreasonably on trifles. This learned man lived at Forli, and had an apartment in the palace. His room was so very dark, that he was forced to use a candle in the day time; and one day, going abroad without putting it out, his library was set on fire, and some papers which he had prepared for the press were burned. The instant he was informed of this ill news, he was affected even to madness. He ran furiously to the palace, and, stopping at the door of his apartment, he cried aloud, “Christ Jesus! what mighty crime have I committed? who of your followers have I ever injured, that you thus rage with inexpiable hatred against me?” Then turning himself to an image of the Virgin Mary near at hand, “Virgin” (says he) “hear what I have to say, for I speak in earnest, and with a composed spirit. If I shall happen to address you in my dying moments, I humbly entreat you not to hear me, nor receive me into heaven, for I am determined to spend all eternity in hell.” Those who heard these blasphemous expressions endeavoured to comfort him, but all to no purpose; for, the society of mankind being no longer supportable to him, he left the city, and retired, like a savage, to the deep solitude of a wood. Some say he was murdered there by ruffians; others that he died at Bologna, in 1500, after much contrition and penitence.’

Almost every one may here read the history of his own life. There is scarcely a moment in which we are not in some degree guilty of the same kind of absurdity, which was here carried to such a singular excess. We waste our regrets on what cannot be recalled, or fix our desires on what we know cannot be attained. Every hour is the slave of the last; and we are seldom masters either of our thoughts or of our actions. We are the creatures of imagination, passion, and self-will, more than of reason or even of self-interest. Rousseau, in his *Emilius*, proposed to educate a perfectly reasonable man, who was to have passions and affections like other men, but with an absolute controul over them. He was to love and to be wise. This is a contradiction in terms. Even in the common transactions and daily intercourse of life, we are governed by whim, caprice, prejudice, or accident. The falling of a tea-cup puts us out of temper for the day; and a quarrel that commenced about the pattern of a gown may end only with our lives.



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‘ Friends now fast sworn,  
On a dissension of a doit, break out  
To bitterest enmity. So fellest foes,  
Whose passions and whose plots have broke their sleep,  
To take the one the other, by some chance,  
Some trick not worth an egg, shall grow dear friends,  
And interjoin their issues.’

We are little better than humoured children to the last, and play a mischievous game at cross purposes with our own happiness and that of others.

We have given the above story as a striking contradiction to the prevailing doctrine of modern systems of morals and metaphysics, that man is purely a sensual and selfish animal, governed solely by a regard either to his immediate gratification or future interest. This doctrine we mean to oppose with all our might, whenever we meet with it. We are, however, less disposed to quarrel with it, as it is opposed to reason and philosophy, than as it interferes with common sense and observation. If the absurdity in question had been confined to the schools, we should not have gone out of our way to meddle with it: but it has got abroad in the world, has crept into ladies’ toilettes, is entered in the common-place of beaux, is in the mouth of the learned and ignorant, and forms a part of popular opinion. It is perpetually applied as a false measure to the characters and conduct of men in the common affairs of the world, and it is therefore our business to rectify it if we can. In fact, whoever sets out on the idea of reducing all our motives and actions to a simple principle, must either take a very narrow and superficial view of human nature, or make a very perverse use of his understanding in reasoning on what he sees. The frame of our minds, like that of our bodies, is exceedingly complicated. Besides mere sensibility to pleasure and pain, there are other original independent principles, necessarily interwoven with the nature of man as an active and intelligent being, and which, blended together in different proportions, give their form and colour to our lives. Without some other essential faculties, such as will, imagination, &c. to give effect and direction to our physical sensibility, this faculty could be of no possible use or influence; and with those other faculties joined to it, this pretended instinct of self-love will be subject to be everlastingly modified and controuled by those faculties, both in what regards our own good and that of others; that is, must itself become in a great measure dependent on the very instruments it uses. The two most predominant principles in the mind, besides sensibility and self-interest, are imagination and self-will, or (in general) the love of strong excitement, both in thought and action. To these sources may be traced the various passions,

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pursuits, habits, affections, follies and caprices, virtues and vices of mankind. We shall confine ourselves in the present article, to give some account of the influence exercised by the imagination over the feelings. To an intellectual being, it cannot be altogether arbitrary what ideas it shall have, whether pleasurable or painful. Our ideas do not originate in our love of pleasure, and they cannot therefore depend absolutely upon it. They have another principle. If the imagination were 'the servile slave' of our self-love, if our ideas were emanations of our sensitive nature, encouraged if agreeable, and excluded the instant they became otherwise, or encroached on the former principle, then there might be a tolerable pretence for the Epicurean philosophy which is here spoken of. But for any such entire and mechanical subserviency of the operations of the one principle to the dictates of the other, there is not the slightest foundation in reality. The attention which the mind gives to its ideas is not always owing to the gratification derived from them, but to the strength and truth of the impressions themselves, *i.e.* to their involuntary power over the mind. This observation will account for a very general principle in the mind, which cannot, we conceive, be satisfactorily explained in any other way, we mean *the power of fascination*. Every one has heard the story of the girl who being left alone by her companions, in order to frighten her, in a room with a dead body, at first attempted to get out, and shrieked violently for assistance, but finding herself shut in, ran and embraced the corpse, and was found senseless in its arms.

It is said that in such cases there is a desperate effort made to get rid of the dread by converting it into the reality. There may be some truth in this account, but we do not think it contains the whole truth. The event produced in the present instance does not bear out the conclusion. The progress of the passion does not seem to have been that of diminishing or removing the terror by coming in contact with the object, but of carrying this terror to its height from an intense and irresistible impulse, overcoming every other feeling.

It is a well-known fact that few persons can stand safely on the edge of a precipice, or walk along the parapet wall of a house, without being in danger of throwing themselves down; not we presume from a principle of self-preservation; but in consequence of a strong idea having taken possession of the mind, from which it cannot well escape, which absorbs every other consideration, and confounds and overrules all self-regards. The impulse cannot in this case be resolved into a desire to remove the uneasiness of fear, for the only danger arises from the fear. We have been told by a person, not at all given to exaggeration, that he once felt a strong

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propensity to throw himself into a cauldron of boiling lead, into which he was looking. These are what Shakespear calls 'the toys of desperation.' People sometimes marry, and even fall in love on this principle—that is, through mere apprehension, or what is called a fatality. In like manner, we find instances of persons who are as it were naturally delighted with whatever is disagreeable,—who catch all sorts of unbecoming tones and gestures,—who always say what they should not, and what they do not mean to say,—in whom intemperance of imagination and incontinence of tongue are a disease, and who are governed by an almost infallible instinct of absurdity.

The love of imitation has the same general source. We dispute for ever about Hogarth, and the question can never be decided according to the common ideas on the subject of taste. His pictures appeal to the love of truth, not to the sense of beauty; but the one is as much an essential principle of our nature as the other. They fill up the void of the mind; they present an everlasting succession and variety of ideas. There is a fine observation somewhere made by Aristotle, that the mind has a natural appetite of curiosity or desire to know; and 'most of that knowledge which comes in by the eye, for this presents us with the greatest variety of differences.' Hogarth is relished only by persons of a certain strength of mind and penetration into character; for the subjects in themselves are not pleasing, and this objection is only redeemed by the exercise and activity which they give to the understanding. The great difference between what is meant by a severe and an effeminate taste or style, depends on the distinction here made.

Our teasing ourselves to recollect the names of places or persons we have forgotten, the love of riddles and of abstruse philosophy, are all illustrations of the same general principle of curiosity, or the love of intellectual excitement. Again, our impatience to be delivered of a secret that we know; the necessity which lovers have for confidants, auricular confession, and the declarations so commonly made by criminals of their guilt, are effects of the involuntary power exerted by the imagination over the feelings. Nothing can be more untrue, than that the whole course of our ideas, passions, and pursuits, is regulated by a regard to self-interest. Our attachment to certain objects is much oftener in proportion to the strength of the impression they make on us, to their power of rivetting and fixing the attention, than to the gratification we derive from them. We are perhaps more apt to dwell upon circumstances that excite disgust and shock our feelings, than on those of an agreeable nature. This, at least, is the case where this disposition is particularly strong, as in people of nervous feelings and morbid habits of thinking. Thus the mind is

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often haunted with painful images and recollections, from the hold they have taken of the imagination. We cannot shake them off, though we strive to do it: nay, we even court their company; we will not part with them out of our presence; we strain our aching sight after them; we anxiously recal every feature, and contemplate them in all their aggravated colours. There are a thousand passions and fancies that thwart our purposes and disturb our repose. Grief and fear are almost as welcome inmates of the breast as hope or joy, and more obstinately cherished. We return to the objects which have excited them, we brood over them, they become almost inseparable from the mind, necessary to it; they assimilate all objects to the gloom of our own thoughts, and make the will a party against itself. This is one chief source of most of the passions that prey like vultures on the heart, and embitter human life. We hear moralists and divines perpetually exclaiming, with mingled indignation and surprise, at the folly of mankind in obstinately persisting in these tormenting and violent passions, such as envy, revenge, sullenness, despair, &c. This is to them a mystery; and it will always remain an inexplicable one, while the love of happiness is considered as the only spring of human conduct and desires.

We shall resume this subject in a future paper.<sup>1</sup>

## THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

*The Examiner.*

*April 9, 1815.*

THE love of power or action is another independent principle of the human mind, in the different degrees in which it exists, and which are not by any means in exact proportion to its physical sensibility. It seems evidently absurd to suppose that sensibility to pleasure or pain is the only principle of action. It is almost too obvious to remark, that sensibility alone, without an active principle in the mind, could never produce action. The soul might lie dissolved in pleasure, or be agonised with woe; but the impulses of feeling, in order to excite passion, desire, or will, must be first communicated to some other faculty. There must be a principle, a fund of activity somewhere, by and through which our sensibility operates; and that

<sup>1</sup> As a contrast to the story at the beginning of this article, it will not be amiss to mention that of Sir Isaac Newton, on a somewhat similar occasion. He had prepared some papers for the press with great care and study, but happening to leave a lighted candle on the table with them, his dog Diamond overturned the candle, and the labour of several years was destroyed. This great man, on seeing what was done, only shook his head, and said with a smile, 'Ah, Diamond, you don't know what mischief you have done!'

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this active principle owes all its force, its precise degree and direction, to the sensitive faculty, is neither self-evident nor true. Strength of will is not always nor generally in proportion to strength of feeling. There are different degrees of activity as of sensibility in the mind; and our passions, characters, and pursuits, often depend no less upon the one than on the other. We continually make a distinction in common discourse between sensibility and irritability, between passion and feeling, between the nerves and muscles; and we find that the most voluptuous people are in general the most indolent. Every one who has looked closely into human nature must have observed persons who are naturally and habitually restless in the extreme, but without any extraordinary susceptibility to pleasure or pain, always making or finding excuses to do something,—whose actions constantly outrun the occasion, and who are eager in the pursuit of the greatest trifles,—whose impatience of the smallest repose keeps them always employed about nothing,—and whose whole lives are a continued work of supererogation. There are others again who seem born to act from a spirit of contradiction only, that is, who are ready to act not only without a reason, but against it,—who are ever at cross-purposes with themselves and others,—who are not satisfied unless they are doing two opposite things at a time,—who contradict what you say, and if you assent to them, contradict what they have said,—who regularly leave the pursuit in which they are successful to engage in some other in which they have no chance of success,—who make a point of encountering difficulties and aiming at impossibilities, that there may be no end of their exhaustless task: while there is a third class whose *vis inertiae* scarcely any motives can overcome,—who are devoured by their feelings, and the slaves of their passions, but who can take no pains and use no means to gratify them,—who, if roused to action by any unforeseen accident, require a continued stimulus to urge them on,—who fluctuate between desire and want of resolution,—whose brightest projects burst like a bubble as soon as formed,—who yield to every obstacle,—who almost sink under the weight of the atmosphere,—who cannot brush aside a cobweb in their path, and are stopped by an insect's wing. Indolence is want of will—the absence or defect of the active principle—a repugnance to motion; and whoever has been much tormented with this passion, must, we are sure, have felt that the inclination to indulge it is something very distinct from the love of pleasure or actual enjoyment. Ambition is the reverse of indolence, and is the love of power or action in great things. Avarice, also, as it relates to the acquisition of riches, is, in a great measure, an active and enterprising feeling; nor does the hoarding of wealth, after it is acquired, seem to have

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much connection with the love of pleasure. What is called niggardliness, very often, we are convinced from particular instances that we have known, arises less from a selfish principle than from a love of contrivance, from the study of economy as an art, for want of a better, from a pride in making the most of a little, and in not exceeding a certain expense previously determined upon; all which is wilfulness, and is perfectly consistent, as it is frequently found united, with the most lavish expenditure and the utmost disregard for money on other occasions. A miser may in general be looked upon as a particular species of *virtuoso*. The constant desire in the rich to leave wealth in large masses, by aggrandising some branch of their families, or sometimes in such a manner as to accumulate for centuries, shews that the imagination has a considerable share in this passion. Intemperance, debauchery, gluttony, and other vices of that kind, may be attributed to an excess of sensuality or gross sensibility; though even here, we think it evident that habits of intoxication are produced quite as much by the strength as by the agreeableness of the excitement; and with respect to some other vicious habits, curiosity makes many more votaries than inclination. The love of truth, when it predominates, produces inquisitive characters, the whole tribe of gossips, tale-bearers, harmless busy bodies, your blunt honest creatures, who never conceal what they think, and who are the more sure to tell it you the less you want to hear it,—and now and then a philosopher.

Our passions in general are to be traced more immediately to the active part of our nature, to the love of power, or to strength of will. Such are all those which arise out of the difficulty of accomplishment, which become more intense from the efforts made to attain the object, and which derive their strength from opposition. Mr. Hobbes says well on this subject :

‘ But for an utmost end, in which the ancient philosophers placed felicity, and disputed much concerning the way thereto, there is no such thing in this world nor way to it, than to Utopia; for while we live, we have desires, and desire presupposeth a further end. Seeing all delight is appetite, and desire of something further, there can be no contentment but in proceeding, and therefore we are not to marvel, when we see that as men attain to more riches, honour, or other power, so their appetite continually groweth more and more; and when they are come to the utmost degree of some kind of power, they pursue some other, as long as in any kind they think themselves behind any other. Of those therefore that have attained the highest degree of honour and riches, some have affected mastery in some art, as Nero in music and poetry, Commodus in the art of a gladiator;

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and such as affect not some such thing, must find diversion and recreation of their thoughts in the contention either of play or business, and men justly complain as of a great grief that they know not what to do. Felicity, therefore, by which we mean continual delight, consists not in having prospered, but in prospering.'

This account of human nature, true at it is, would be a mere romance, if physical sensibility were the only faculty essential to man, that is, if we were the slaves of voluptuous indolence. But our desires are kindled by their own heat, the will is urged on by a restless impulse, and, without action, enjoyment becomes insipid. The passions of men are not in proportion only to their sensibility, or to the desirableness of the object, but to the violence and irritability of their tempers, and the obstacles to their success. Thus an object, to which we were almost indifferent while we thought it in our power, often excites the most ardent pursuit or the most painful regret, as soon as it is placed out of our reach. How eloquently is the contradiction between our desires and our success described in Don Quixote where it is said of the lover, that 'he courted a statue, hunted the wind, cried aloud to the desert!'

The necessity of action to the mind, and the keen edge it gives to our desires, is shewn in the different value we set on past and future objects. It is commonly and we might almost say universally supposed, that there is an essential difference in the two cases. In this instance, however, the strength of our passions has converted an evident absurdity into one of the most inveterate prejudices of the human mind. That the future is really or in itself of more consequence than the past, is what we can neither assent to nor even conceive. It is true, the past has ceased to be and is no longer any thing, except to the mind; but the future is still to come, and has an existence in the mind only. The one is at an end, the other has not even had a beginning; both are purely ideal: so that this argument would prove that the present only is of any real value, and that both past and future objects are equally indifferent, alike nothing. Indeed, the future is, if possible, more imaginary than the past; for the past may in some sense be said to exist in its consequences; it acts still; it is present to us in its effects; the mouldering ruins and broken fragments still remain; but of the future there is no trace. What a blank does the history of the world for the next six thousand years, present to the mind, compared with that of the last! All that strikes the imagination, or excites any interest in the mighty scene, is *what has been*. Neither in reality, then, nor as a subject of general contemplation, has the future any advantage over the past; but with respect to our own passions and pursuits it has. We regret the

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pleasures we have enjoyed, and eagerly anticipate those which are to come; we dwell with satisfaction on the evils from which we have escaped, and dread future pain. The good that is past is like money that is spent, which is of no use, and about which we give ourselves no farther concern. The good we expect is like a store yet untouched, in the enjoyment of which we promise ourselves infinite gratification. What has happened to us we think of no consequence,—what is to happen to us, of the greatest. Why so? Because the one is in our power, and the other not; because the efforts of the will to bring an object to pass or to avert it strengthen our attachment to or our aversion from that object; because the habitual pursuit of any purpose redoubles the ardour of our pursuit, and converts the speculative and indolent interest we should otherwise take in it into real passion. Our regrets, anxiety, and wishes, are thrown away upon the past, but we encourage our disposition to exaggerate the importance of the future, as of the utmost use in aiding our resolutions and stimulating our exertions.

It in some measure confirms this theory, that men attach more or less importance to past and future events, according as they are more or less engaged in action and the busy scenes of life. Those who have a fortune to make, or are in pursuit of rank and power, are regardless of the past, for it does not contribute to their views: those who have nothing to do but to think, take nearly the same interest in the past as in the future. The contemplation of the one is as delightful and real as of the other. The season of hope comes to an end, but the remembrance of it is left. The past still lives in the memory of those who have leisure to look back upon the way that they have trod, and can from it 'catch glimpses that may make them less forlorn.' The turbulence of action and uneasiness of desire *must* dwell upon the future; it is only amidst the innocence of shepherds, in the simplicity of the pastoral ages, that a tomb was found with this inscription—'I ALSO WAS AN ARCADIAN!'

We feel that some apology is necessary for having thus plunged our readers all at once into the middle of metaphysics. If it should be asked what use such studies are of, we might answer with Hume, *perhaps of none, except that there are certain persons who find more entertainment in them than in any other.* An account of this matter, with which we were amused ourselves, and which may therefore amuse others, we met with some time ago in a metaphysical allegory, which begins in this manner:—

'In the depth of a forest, in the kingdom of Indostan, lived a monkey, who, before his last step of transmigration, had occupied a human tenement. He had been a Bramin, skilful in theology, and



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in all abstruse learning. He was wont to hold in admiration the ways of Nature, and delighted to penetrate the mysteries in which she was enrobed; but in pursuing the footsteps of philosophy, he wandered too far from the abode of the social Virtues. In order to pursue his studies, he had retired to a cave on the banks of the Jumna. There he forgot society, and neglected ablution; and therefore his soul was degraded to a condition below humanity. So inveterate were the habits which he had contracted in his human state, that his spirit was still influenced by his passion for abstruse study. He sojourned in this wood from youth to age, regardless of everything, *save cocoa-nuts and metaphysics.* For our own part, we should be content to pass our time much in the same way as this learned savage, if we could only find a substitute for his cocoa-nuts! We do not, however, wish to recommend the same pursuit to others, nor to dissuade them from it. It has its pleasures and its pains—its successes and its disappointments. It is neither quite so sublime nor quite so uninteresting as it is sometimes represented. The worst is, that much thought on difficult subjects tends, after a certain time, to destroy the natural gaiety and dancing of the spirits; it deadens the elastic force of the mind, weighs upon the heart, and makes us insensible to the common enjoyments and pursuits of life.

'Sithence no fairy lights, no quick'ning ray,  
Nor stir of pulse, nor objects to entice  
Abroad the spirits; but the cloyster'd heart  
Sits squat at home, like pagod in a niche  
Obscure.'

Metaphysical reasoning is also one branch of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The study of man, however, does, perhaps, less harm than a knowledge of the world, though it must be owned that the practical knowledge of vice and misery makes a stronger impression on the mind, when it has imbibed a habit of abstract reasoning. Evil thus becomes embodied in a general principle, and shews its harpy form in all things. It is a fatal, inevitable necessity hanging over us. It follows us wherever we go: if we fly into the uttermost parts of the earth, it is there: whether we turn to the right or the left, we cannot escape from it. This, it is true, is the disease of philosophy; but it is one to which it is liable in minds of a certain cast, after the first order of expectation has been disabused by experience, and the finer feelings have received an irrecoverable shock from the jarring of the world.

Happy are they who live in the dream of their own existence, and see all things in the light of their own minds; who walk by faith and hope; to whom the guiding star of their youth still shines

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from afar, and into whom the spirit of the world has not entered ! They have not been ‘hurt by the archers,’ nor has the iron entered their souls. They live in the midst of arrows and of death, unconscious of harm. The evil things come not nigh them. The shafts of ridicule pass unheeded by, and malice loses its sting. The example of vice does not rankle in their breasts, like the poisoned shirt of Nessus. Evil impressions fall off from them like drops of water. The yoke of life is to them light and supportable. The world has no hold on them. They are in it, not of it ; and a dream and a glory is ever around them !

## ON MANNER

*The Examiner.*

*September 3, 1815.*

NOTHING can frequently be more striking than the difference of style or manner, where the *matter* remains the same, as in paraphrases and translations. The most remarkable example which occurs to us is in the beginning of the *Flower and Leaf* by Chaucer, and in the modernisation of the same passage by Dryden. We shall give an extract from both, that the reader may judge for himself. The original runs thus :—

‘ And I that all this pleasaunt sight see,  
Thought sodainly I felte so sweet an aire  
Of the elgentere, that certainly  
There is no herte I deme, in such dispaire,  
Ne with thoughts froward and contraire  
So overlaid, but it should soone have bote,  
If it had ones felt this savour sote.

And as I stood and cast aside mine eie,  
I was of ware the fairest medler tree,  
That ever yet in all my life I see,  
As full of blossomes as it might be,  
Therein a goldfinch leaping pretile  
Fro bough to bough, and as him list he eet,  
Here and there of buds and floures sweet.

And to the herber side was joyning  
This faire tree of which I have you told ;  
And at the last the bird began to sing,  
When he had eaten what he eat wold,  
So passing sweetly, that by manifold  
It was more pleasaunt than I could devise ;  
And when his song was ended in this wise,

The nightingale with so mery a note  
Answered him, that all the wood rang  
So sodainly, that as it were a sote,

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I stood astonied, so was I with the sang  
Thorow ravished, that till late and lang,  
I ne wist in what place I was, ne where,  
And aye me thought she sang even by mine ear.

Wherefore I waited about busily  
On every side, if I her might see,  
And at the last I gan full well espie  
Where she sat in a fresh green laurer tree,  
On the further side even right by me,  
That gave so passing a delicious smell,  
According to the eglentere full well.

Whereof I had so inly great pleasure;  
That as me thought I surely ravished was  
Into Paradise, where my desire  
Was for to be and no further to passe,  
As for that day, and on the sote grasse  
I sat me downe, for as for mine intent,  
The birdes song was more convenient,

And more pleasaunt to me by manifold,  
Than meat or drinke, or any other thing,  
Thereto the herber was so fresh and cold,  
The wholesome savours eke so comforting,  
That as I deemed, sith the beginning  
Of the world was never seene or then  
So pleasaunt a ground of none earthly man.

And as I sat, the birdes harkening thus,  
Me thought that I heard voices sodainly,  
The most sweetest and most delicious  
That ever any wight I trow truly  
Heard in their life; for the harmony  
And sweet accord was in so good musike,  
That the voices to angels most was like.'

In this passage the poet has let loose the very soul of pleasure. There is a spirit of enjoyment in it, of which there seems no end. It is the intense delight which accompanies the description of every object, the fund of natural sensibility it displays, which constitutes its whole essence and beauty. Now this is shewn chiefly in the manner in which the different objects are anticipated, and the eager welcome which is given to them; in his repeating and varying the circumstances with a restless delight; in his quitting the subject for a moment, and then returning to it again, as if he could never have his fill of enjoyment. There is little of this in Dryden's paraphrase. The same ideas are introduced, but not in the same manner, nor with the same spirit. The imagination of the poet is not borne along with the tide of pleasure—the verse is not poured out, like the natural strains

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it describes, from pure delight, but according to rule and measure. Instead of being absorbed in his subject, he is dissatisfied with it, tries to give an air of dignity to it by factitious ornaments, to amuse the reader by ingenious allusions, and divert his attention from the progress of the story by the artifices of the style.

' The painted birds, companions of the spring,  
Hopping from spray to spray, were heard to sing;  
Both eyes and ears received a like delight,  
Enchanting music, and a charming sight :  
On Philomel I fixed my whole desire,  
And listen'd for the queen of all the quire :  
Fain would I hear her heavenly voice to sing,  
And wanted yet an omen to the spring.  
Thus as I mus'd, I cast aside my eye  
And saw a medlar tree was planted nigh :  
The spreading branches made a goodly show,  
And full of opening blooms was every bough :  
A goldfinch there I saw with gaudy pride  
Of painted plumes, that hopp'd from side to side,  
Still pecking as she pass'd; and still she drew  
The sweets from every flow'r, and suck'd the dew;  
Suffic'd at length, she warbled in her throat,  
And tun'd her voice to many a merry note,  
But indistinct, and neither sweet nor clear,  
Yet such as sooth'd my soul, and pleas'd my ear,  
Her short performance was no sooner tried,  
When she I sought, the nightingale, replied :  
So sweet, so shrill, so variously she sung,  
That the grove echo'd, and the vallies rung :  
And I so ravish'd with her heavenly note,  
I stood entranc'd, and had no room for thought;  
But all o'erpower'd with ecstasy of bliss,  
Was in a pleasing dream of paradise :  
At length I wak'd; and looking round the bower,  
Search'd every tree, and pry'd on every flower,  
If any where by chance I might espy  
The rural poet of the melody :  
For still methought she sung not far away;  
At last I found her on a laurel spray.  
Close by my side she sat, and fair in sight,  
Full in a line, against her opposite;  
Where stood with eglantine the laurel twin'd;  
And both their native sweets were well conjoin'd,  
On the green bank I sat, and listen'd long;  
(Sitting was more convenient for the song)  
Nor till her lay was ended could I move,  
But wish'd to dwell for ever in the grove.  
Only methought the time too swiftly pass'd,  
And every note I fear'd would be the last.  
My sight, and smell, and hearing were employ'd,  
And all three senses in full gust enjoy'd.

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And what alone did all the rest surpass  
The sweet possession of the fairy place;  
Single, and conscious to myself alone  
Of pleasures to th' excluded world unknown :  
Pleasures which no where else were to be found,  
And all Elysium in a spot of ground.

Thus while I sat intent to see and hear,  
And drew perfumes of more than vital air,  
All suddenly I heard the approaching sound  
Of vocal music, on th' enchanted ground :  
An host of saints it seem'd, so full the quire,  
As if the blest above did all conspire  
To join their voices, and neglect the lyre.'

Compared with Chaucer, Dryden and the rest of that school were merely *verbal poets*. They had a great deal of wit, sense and fancy; they only wanted truth and depth of feeling. But we shall have to say more on this subject, when we come to consider the old question which we have got marked down in our list, whether Pope was a poet?

To return to the subject of our last Number, Lord Chesterfield's character of the Duke of Marlborough is a good illustration of his general theory. He says :—' Of all the men I ever knew in my life (and I knew him extremely well) the late Duke of Marlborough possessed the graces in the highest degree, not to say engrossed them; for I will venture (contrary to the custom of profound historians, who always assign deep causes for great events) to ascribe the better half of the Duke of Marlborough's greatness and riches to those graces. He was eminently illiterate : wrote bad English, and spelt it worse. He had no share of what is commonly called parts; that is, no brightness, nothing shining in his genius. He had most undoubtedly an excellent good plain understanding with sound judgment. But these alone would probably have raised him but something higher than they found him, which was page to King James II.'s Queen. There the graces protected and promoted him; for while he was Ensign of the Guards, the Duchess of Cleveland, then favourite mistress of Charles II., struck by these very graces, gave him five thousand pounds; with which he immediately bought an annuity of five hundred pounds a year, which was the foundation of his subsequent fortune. His figure was beautiful, but his manner was irresistible by either man or woman. It was by this engaging, graceful manner, that he was enabled during all his wars to connect the various and jarring powers of the grand alliance, and to carry them on to the main object of the war, notwithstanding their private and separate views, jealousies, and wrong headedness. Whatever court he went to (and he was often obliged to go himself to some resty and

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refractory ones) he as constantly prevailed, and brought them into his measures.'<sup>1</sup>

Grace in woman has often more effect than beauty. We sometimes see a certain fine self-possession, an habitual voluptuousness of character, which reposes on its own sensations, and derives pleasure from all around it, that is more irresistible than any other attraction. There is an air of languid enjoyment in such persons, 'in their eyes, in their arms, and their hands, and their face,' which robs us of ourselves, and draws us by a secret sympathy towards them. Their minds are a shrine where pleasure reposes. Their smile diffuses a sensation like the breath of spring. Petrarch's description of Laura answers exactly to this character, which is indeed the Italian character. Titian's pictures are full of it: they seem sustained by sentiment, or as if the persons whom he painted sat to music. There is one in the Louvre (or there was) which had the most of this expression, we ever remember. It did not look downward; 'it looked forward, beyond this world.' It was a look that never passed away, but remained unalterable as the deep sentiment which gave birth to it. It is the same constitutional character (together with infinite activity of mind) which has enabled the greatest man in modern history to bear his reverses of fortune with gay magnanimity, and to submit to the loss of the empire of the world with as little discomposure as if he had been playing a game at chess.

After all, we would not be understood to say that manner is every thing.<sup>2</sup> Nor would we put Euclid or Sir Isaac Newton on a level with

<sup>1</sup> We have an instance in our own times of a man, equally devoid of understanding and principle, but who manages the House of Commons by his *manner* alone.

<sup>2</sup> Sheer impudence answers almost the same purpose. 'Those impenetrable whiskers have confronted flames.' Many persons, by looking big and talking loud, make their way through the world without any one good quality. We have here said nothing of mere personal qualifications, which are another set-off against sterling merit. Fielding was of opinion that 'the more solid pretensions of virtue and understanding vanish before perfect beauty.' 'A certain lady of a manor' (says Don Quixote in defence of his attachment to Dulcinea, which however was quite of the Platonic kind), 'had cast the eyes of affection on a certain squat, brawny lay brother of a neighbouring monastery, to whom she was lavish of her favours. The head of the order remonstrated with her on this preference shown to one whom he represented as a very low, ignorant fellow, and set forth the superior pretensions of himself, and his more learned brethren. The lady having heard him to an end, made answer: All that you have said may be very true; but know, that in those points which I admire, Brother Chrysostom is as great a philosopher, nay greater than Aristotle himself!' So the Wife of Bath:

'To church was mine husband borne on the morrow  
With neighbours that for him maden sorrow,  
And Jenkin our clerk was one of tho:  
As help me God, when that I saw him go

## COBBETT AND SHAKESPEAR: A POSTSCRIPT

the first *petit-maitre* we might happen to meet. We consider *Æsop's Fables* to have been a greater work of genius than Fontaine's translation of them; though we are not sure that we should not prefer Fontaine for his style only, to Gay, who has shewn a great deal of original invention. The elegant manners of people of fashion have been objected to us to shew the frivolity of external accomplishments, and the facility with which they are acquired. As to the last point, we demur. There are no class of people who lead so laborious a life, or who take more pains to cultivate their minds as well as persons, than people of fashion. A young lady of quality who has to devote so many hours a day to music, so many to dancing, so many to drawing, so many to French, Italian, &c. certainly does not pass her time in idleness; and these accomplishments are afterwards called into action by every kind of external or mental stimulus, by the excitements of pleasure, vanity and interest. A Ministerial or Opposition Lord goes through more drudgery than half a dozen literary hacks; nor does a reviewer by profession read half the same number of publications as a modern fine lady is obliged to labour through. We confess, however, we are not competent judges of the degree of elegance or refinement implied in the general tone of fashionable manners. The successful experiment made by Peregrine Pickle, in introducing his strolling mistress into genteel company, does not redound greatly to their credit. In point of elegance of external appearance, we see no difference between women of fashion and women of a different character, who dress in the same style.

## COBBETT AND SHAKESPEAR: A POSTSCRIPT

*The Examiner.*

November 26, 1815.

WE had just concluded our ramble with Puck and Bottom, and were beginning to indulge in some less airy recreations, when in came the last week's *Cobbett*, and with one blow upset our Round Table, and marred all our good things. If while Mr. C. and his lady are sitting in their garden at Botley, like Adam and Eve in Paradise, the delight of one another, the envy of their neighbours, and the admiration of the rest of the world, suddenly a large fat hog from the wilds of Hampshire should bolt right through the hedge, and with snorting menaces

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After the bier, methought he had a pair  
Of legs and feet, so clean and fair,  
That all my heart I gave unto his hold.'

'All which, though we most potently believe, yet we hold it not honesty to have it thus set down.'

## COBBETT AND SHAKESPEAR: A POSTSCRIPT

and foaming tusks, proceed to lay waste the flower-pots and root up the potatoes, such as the surprise and indignation of so economical a couple would be on this occasion, was the consternation at our Table when Mr. Cobbett himself made his appearance among us, vowing vengeance against Milton and Shakespear, Sir Hugh Evans and Justice Shallow, and all the delights of human life. We were not prepared for such an onset. More barbarous than Mr. Wordsworth's calling Voltaire dull, or than Voltaire's calling Cato the only English tragedy; more barbarous than Mr. Locke's admiration of Sir Richard Blackmore; more barbarous than the declaration of a German Elector—afterwards made into an English king—that he hated poets and painters; more barbarous than the Duke of Wellington's letter to Lord Castlereagh, or than the *Catalogue Raisonné* of the Flemish Masters published in the *Morning Chronicle*, or than the Latin style of the second Greek scholar of the age, or the English style of the first:—more barbarous than any or all of these is Mr. Cobbett's attack on our two great poets. As to Milton, except the fine egotism of the situation of Adam and Eve, which Mr. Cobbett has applied to himself, there is not much in him to touch our politician: but we cannot understand his attack upon Shakespear, which is cutting his own throat. If Mr. Cobbett is for getting rid of his kings and queens, his fops and his courtiers, if he is for pelting Sir Hugh and Falstaff off the stage, yet what will he say to Jack Cade and First and Second Mob? If we are to scout the Roman rabble, where will the *Register* find English readers? Has the author never found himself out in Shakespear? He may depend upon it he is there, for all the people that ever lived are there! Has he never been struck with the valour of Ancient Pistol, who 'would not swagger in any shew of resistance to a Barbary-hen'? Can he not, upon occasion, 'aggravate his voice' like Bottom in the play? In absolute insensibility, he is a fool to Master Barnardine; and there is enough of gross animal instinct in Caliban to make a whole herd of Cobbetts. Mr. Cobbett admires Bonaparte; and yet there is nothing finer in any of his addresses to the French people than what Coriolanus says to the Romans when they banish him. He abuses the Allies in good set terms; yet one speech of Constance describes them and their magnanimity better than all the columns of the *Political Register*. Mr. Cobbett's address to the people of England on the alarm of an invasion, which was stuck on all the church-doors in Great Britain, was not more eloquent than Henry V.'s address to his soldiers before the battle of Agincourt; nor do we think Mr. Cobbett was ever a better specimen of the common English character than the two soldiers in the same play. After all, there is something so droll in his falling foul of Shakespear for want



## ON THE DOCTRINE OF

of delicacy, with his desperate lounges and bear-garden dexterity, snorting, fuming, and grunting, that we cannot help laughing at the affair, now that our surprise is over; as we suppose Mr. Cobbett does, if he can only keep him out of his premises by hallooing and hooting or dry blows, to see his old friend, Grill, trudging along the high-road in search of his acorns and pignuts.

## ON THE DOCTRINE OF PHILOSOPHICAL NECESSITY

*The Examiner.*

*December 10, 1815.*

—— ‘For I had learnt a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean and the living air  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man,  
A motion and a spirit that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things.’

PERHAPS, the doctrine of what has been called philosophical necessity was never more finely expressed than in these lines of a poet, who, if he had written only half of what he has done, would have deserved to be immortal. There can be no doubt that all that exists, exists by necessity; that the vast fabric of the universe is held together in one mighty chain, reaching to the ‘threshold of Jove’s throne’; that whatever has a beginning, must have a cause; that there is no object, no feeling, no action, which, other things being the same, could have been otherwise; that thought follows thought, like wave following wave; that chance or accident has no share in any thing that comes to pass in the moral or the physical world; that whatever is, must be; that whatever has been, must have been; that whatever is to be will be necessarily.

I never could doubt for a moment of the truth of this general principle, and I never could comprehend the inferences which have commonly been drawn from it, both by friends and foes. All the moral consequences which have been attributed to it appear to me mere idle prejudices against it on one side, and equally gratuitous concessions on the other. The doctrine of necessity leaves morality just where it found it. It does not destroy goodness of disposition or energy of character, any more than it destroys beauty or strength of person. It does not take away the powers of the mind any more than the use of the limbs. That every thing is by necessity, no more proves that there is no such thing as good and evil, virtue and vice, right and wrong, in the moral world, than it proves that there is no

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such thing as day or night, heat or cold, sweet or sour, food or poison, in the physical. Merit or demerit, that is to say, praise and blame, reward and punishment, have no place in the physical world, but that is because they have no effect there; and for the same reason they have a place in the moral, because they have an effect there. All the practical conclusions which have been ascribed to the difference between liberty and necessity, may be equally accounted for (as they really had their rise) from the difference between moral and physical necessity.

Man acts from a cause; and so far he resembles a stone; but he does not act from the same cause, and herein he differs from it. There is a print which I have seen from a picture by Ludovico Caracci, in which a female figure, with a lion by her side, is represented striking a flame of fire at her feet with a drawn sword. I do not very well understand the allegory, but it appears to me to furnish a very tolerable illustration of the difference between moral and physical necessity: for whether this figure strikes the flame with the flat or the sharp side of the sword, it divides and rises again equally; it is incapable of punishment for it has no sense of pain, nor does it apprehend a repetition of the blow. Is it the same with the human mind? No; for it has both the sense of pain and the sense of consequences, which render it liable to punishment, by making that punishment one effectual and necessary means of influencing its conduct. A man differs from a stone in that he has feeling and understanding; and it is this difference that makes him a moral and responsible agent in the true meaning of the terms, by connecting his present impulses with their future consequences. It may be said that animals have feeling, and a certain degree of understanding: and so far they are liable to correction and punishment. A dog or a horse is terrified at the whip or the spur as well as encouraged by kindness. We very properly, therefore, threaten them with the one and allure them with the other, though we neither preach to them of heaven nor hell, because they have no notion about either. As far as they have understanding, they have free-will, for these two words mean one and the same thing. Man is the only religious animal, because he alone (from a greater power of imagination) extends his views of consequences into another state of being.—The application of praise or blame, as well as of reward and punishment, is proper, wherever it is likely to have an effect. We do not talk to the deaf: we do not shew pictures to the blind; we do not reason with a wild beast; we do not quarrel with a stone. Because it would be useless. But we *do* talk to those who can hear; we shew pictures to those who can see; we reason with prejudice; we quarrel with ill-nature. The

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human mind differs from an inanimate substance or an automaton, inasmuch as it is actuated by sympathy as well as by necessity. We indeed praise a flower, a statue, or a beautiful face, because they give us pleasure : we praise a virtuous action, as an additional incentive to virtue. 'Praise and blame, reward and punishment' (says Mr. Hobbes) 'are just and proper, because they fashion the will to justice.'

Merit, in the scholastic sense, means something self-caused, and independent of motives. This sense of the term is flat nonsense, for there is nothing without a cause—nothing which is not owing to some other thing. The whole theory of merit may be said to turn upon the capacity of any person or thing to mould itself according to the opinion entertained of it. A stone has not this capacity ; and therefore there is no merit in a stone. If you tell a country-girl that she is handsome or well made, her answer generally will be, that 'She is as God made her.' This however does not prove that she is not well made. It is only meant to shew, that as she has had no hand in her own shape, and can do nothing to mend it, the merit is so far none of hers. But if you praise the neatness of her dress, she has not the same evasion left, but thinks the flattery well bestowed, for she is conscious that this depends upon herself ; that she can stay a longer or a shorter time at her glass as she pleases ; and that the pains she has taken have been with a view to the good opinion you express of her. The difference between natural and acquired graces is an obvious dictate of common sense ; unless we adopt the opinion of the Clown, that 'a good favour is the effect of study, but reading and writing come by nature.' It is a piece of brutality and ill-nature to point at a hump-backed man, and call him My Lord : but there is no great harm in laughing at a person with an awkward slovenly gait, for the ridicule may remedy the defect. A person has it in his power to turn his toes out instead of in, whenever he chuses : he cannot get rid of a natural deformity by any effort of will. Beauty and power of every kind excite our love and admiration, whether in nature, in morals, or in art ; but still with a difference. St. Paul's is a much nobler as well as larger building than St. Dunstan's. We accordingly admire the one much more than the other ; but we allow no more merit to the one than the other. All the difference of merit we ascribe to the architect, and not to the building. Why so ? Because all the vanity belongs to the architect, and not to the building.—St. Paul's stands where it does ; it lifts its majestic dome to the skies, whether it is seen or not, whether it is admired or not. It has (familiarily speaking) done nothing to deserve our good opinion, for it has done nothing with a view to it. Now for the same reason that

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the building has not, the builder *has* merited our good opinion, for he did what he has done with that very view; was sensible to that good opinion, and stimulated to exertion by it. It is evident that the admiration we bestow on any work of art, as an actual object, is involuntary; it makes no difference in the object whether we bestow it or not; we therefore do not make a point of bestowing it: the praise we give to the artist is voluntary, and merited in this farther sense, that we are bound to bestow it as a means to an end: we indulge it not merely as a sentiment naturally excited by the contemplation of excellence, but the expression of which is a reward due to the pains taken by the artist, and to the encouragement of genius. Disapprobation and punishment on the other hand necessarily give pain to the person who is the object of them, but it is to produce a remote good. However, it equally follows in either case, that our love and hatred of what is amiable or odious in conscious agents must be different from our feeling towards unconscious ones, from the sense of the difference of the consequences. The lever, the screw, and the wedge, are the great instruments of the mechanical world: opinion, sympathy, praise and blame, reward and punishment, are the lever, the screw, and the wedge, of the moral world. A house is built of stones; human character depends on motives. Is there therefore no difference between one character and another? As well might it be said that there is no difference between one building and another. If merit means something in character, independent of motives and of all other things, then there can be no such thing as merit: but if by merit we mean something which excites our approbation of one character more than another, and which something is still farther entitled to our approbation, because it depends upon it for its motive and encouragement, then undoubtedly this word has a rational meaning in it. To deny praise or blame, reward or punishment, to actions, because they are produced by motives, is to take away the prop from a house, because it supports it.—Necessity only supersedes merit by superseding the operation of motives. It is pretended, that if any action is not perfectly gratuitous, if it can be traced to any other cause, the merit must be transferred to that other cause, and so on without end. This infinite series may be cut short by observing, that any action is entitled to our good opinion which is affected by it. If our opinion had no influence on the actions of others, there would so far be no merit. If any one going up Holborn-hill is pushed by a stronger man against a window and breaks it, who is the responsible person? The one who pushed the other, and not the one who broke the glass. Because punishment or correcting the moral sense will not prevent a weak man from being pushed against

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a window by a strong one, but it will prevent the strong man from pushing him against it. It makes no difference that this person did not act at first without a motive; the point is, that here is another motive which will counteract the former one. The true cause of any thing in the practical and moral sense, is that, by removing which the effect ceases. A man is a moral agent only in so far as he can do what he will: for motives can only operate on the will. A man in chains or held by force is not accountable for what he does, for blame or praise him ever so much, and he will do, not what you wish him, but what others force him to do. You may reasonably exhort a man not to throw himself over Westminster Bridge, but it is in vain, after he has thrown himself over, to call out to him to stop. Morality means that we have the power to do certain things, *if we will*, or help them, *if we please*.

Merit is moral energy. It is the sense of merit which is the great stimulus of exertion. One thing is more difficult, requires a greater effort than another. The sense of merit is in proportion to the sense of difficulty. The highest praise is given to the highest exertions, the greatest rewards are due where the greatest sacrifices have been made. The degree of merit depends then on the degree of voluntary power exerted: for exertion deserves every kind of encouragement and assistance as it becomes difficult. We give a boy sixpence for going a mile; a shilling for going two. We need not offer rewards and largesses to vice and indolence; for all the sanctions of religion and morality are not sufficient to correct them. The admiration with which the story of Marvell and his leg of mutton is read has not prevented the facility of some modern patriots in commencing courtiers; but if it should only save us from a single birthday ode, it will be something. The phlegmatic Dutchman, in playing at skittles, follows his bowl with his eye, writhes his body to make it turn right, and cheers it with his voice. If the bowl had sympathy so as to bend with his body, and to be encouraged to go a little farther by his praising it, there would be some sense in his doing so. Amphion is said to have raised the walls of Thebes with the sound of his lyre: in one sense the fable might be true, for he might have drawn together and civilized his followers by the power of song. The words which Madame de Staël some time ago addressed to the Germans, *Allemagne, tu es une nation, et tu pleurs*, were not without their effect. Neither perhaps would the same words be so now, addressed to her own country—*France, tu es une nation, et tu pleurs!*

We have been led to these remarks by receiving an epistle from an elderly maiden lady, who complains that she has spent her whole life in censuring and back-biting her neighbours, and that by what we let

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fall some time ago, about there being no such thing as merit and demerit, we had debarred her of the only use of her tongue and pleasure of her life. We are sorry to have interrupted her, and hope she will now proceed. We have a good deal left to say on the subject :—

‘ But there is matter for a second rhyme,  
And we to this must add another tale.’

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*The Examiner.*

*December 24, 1815.*

BEING very busy or very indolent this week (it is no matter which), we have had recourse to our common-place book (the first or last resource of authors), and there find the following instances of parallel passages, which are at the service of the critics. The conclusion of Voltaire's tragedy of *Zaire* is the speech of Orosman, who has killed his mistress, to her brother, Nerestan :—

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‘ Et toi,  
Guerrier infortuné, mais moins encore que moi,  
Quitte ces lieux sanglans, remporte en ta patrie  
Cet objet que ma rage a privé de la vie.  
Ton Roi, tous les Chrétiens, apprenant ces malheurs,  
N'en parleront jamais sans répandre des pleurs,  
Mais si la vérité par toi se fait connaître,  
En détestant mon crime, on me plaindra, peut-être.  
Porte aux tiens ce poignard, que mon bras égaré  
A plongé dans un sein que dût m'être sacré;  
Dis-leur que j'ai donné la mort la plus affreuse  
À la plus digne femme, à la plus vertueuse,  
Dont le Ciel a formé les innocens appas;  
Dis-leur qu'à ses genoux j'avais mis mes États;  
Dis-leur que dans mon sang cette main est plongé;  
Dis que je l'adorais, et que je l'ai vengée.—(*Il se tue*).’

This will probably remind our readers, as it did us, of Othello's farewell speech :—

‘ Soft you; a word or two before you go.  
I have done the state some service, and they know it;  
No more of that. I pray you in your letters,  
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,  
Speak of me, as I am. Nothing extenuate,  
Nor set down aught in malice.  
Then must you speak  
Of one that lov'd not wisely, but too well;  
Of one not easily jealous, but being wrought,  
Perplex'd in the extreme; of one, whose hand,

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Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away  
Richer than all his tribe; of one, whose eyes,  
Albeit unused to the melting mood,  
Drops tears as fast as the Arabian trees  
Their medicinal gums. Set you down this.  
And say besides, that in Aleppo once,  
Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk  
Beat a Venetian, and traduc'd the state,  
I took by the throat the circumcised dog,  
And smote him, thus.—(*Stabs himself.*)'

After transcribing the above passage, we were looking about for the traces of the former one, which had 'vanished into thin air,' and were beginning to suspect that our parallel had totally failed, till in looking into the lucubrations of Mr. William Wade, who has tried to kick a hole in Shakespeare, we learnt that the French translator of our poet had *bona fide* translated the passage into legitimate French verse, and that Voltaire had in consequence, with singular modesty, complained that Ducis had improved upon the original and stolen the whole turn of the passage from him. To be sure, there is a wide difference in the two passages. There is nothing in the French poet of the 'No more of that,' that fine natural interruption to the gasconade which his distress had just extorted from him; there is nothing of 'One that loved not wisely, but too well,' there is nothing of Indian pearls or Arabian gums, nor is there any allusion to Aleppo, nor description of 'a malignant and turbaned Turk'; nor any thing like that fine return upon himself, and transition from the depth of a dejected spirit to the recollection of former acts of daring defiance, while in his despair he inflicts on himself the blow with which he formerly chastised an insolent foe. These circumstances are given 'as over-measure' in Shakespeare, and would be considered as superfluous and extravagant by the French critics; yet they are exactly the circumstances which the Moor *Othello* must have been best acquainted with, and which, as some of the most striking circumstances of his past life, would be forcibly recalled to his memory in parting with it. Voltaire has not invented any thing of the same sort for his dying hero; his speech (though a very good one of its kind) is, as Susannah says to Trim, 'as flat as the palm of one's hand;' it has nothing objectionable in it; it is just such a speech as any crowned head might make in any of the four quarters of the globe.—May we be allowed to add (in passing), that Mr. Kean does not act this scene well? He gnashes his teeth, and strikes the dagger into his bosom, as if he had taken some particular enmity against his own flesh. But this is not so in Shakespeare. The feeling of *Othello* is a lofty absence of mind, in

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which he throws himself back from the present into the past; the image he recalls furnishes not only the precedent but the consolation of his present act; and the pang which he inflicts on himself is relieved, and unconsciously confounded with the recollection of former acts of grandeur, and elevation of soul. But to proceed.—

In the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus, is a very beautiful description of the signal fires that were to announce the destruction of Troy, thus translated by Potter :—

‘*Chorus.* What speed could be the herald of this news?  
*Clytemnestra.* The fire that from the height of Ida sent  
Its streaming light, as from the announcing flame  
Torch blaz’d to torch. First Ida to the steep  
Of Lemnos; Athos’ sacred height receiv’d  
The mighty splendour; from the surging back  
Of th’Hellespont the vig’rous blaze held on  
Its smiling way, and like the orient sun  
Illumes with golden-gleaming rays the head  
Of rocky Macetas : nor lingers there,  
Nor winks unheedful, but its warming flames  
Darts to the steams of Euripus, and gives  
Its glittering signal to the guards that hold  
Their high watch on Mesapius. These enkindle  
The joy-denouncing fires, that spread the blaze  
To where Erica hoar his shaggy brow  
Waves rudely. Unimpaired the active flame  
Bounds o’er the level of Asopus, like  
The jocund moon, and on Cithaeron’s steep  
Wakes a successive flame; the distant watch  
Agnise its shine, and raise a brighter fire,  
That o’er the Lake Gorgopis streaming holds  
Its rapid course, and on the mountainous heights  
Of Aegiplantus huge, swift-shooting spreads  
The lengthen’d line of light. Thence onward waves  
Its fiery tresses, eager to ascend  
The crags of Prone, frowning in their pride  
O’er the Saronic gulf : it leaps, it mounts  
The summit of Arachne, whose high head  
Looks down on Argos; to this royal seat  
Thence darts the light that from th’Idean fire  
Derives its birth. Rightly in order thus  
Each to the next consigns the torch, that fills  
The bright succession, while the first in speed  
Vies with the last : the promis’d signal this,  
Giv’n by my Lord t’announce the fall of Troy.’

In Drayton’s *Polyolbion* (Song 30) this idea is finely varied :—

‘Which Copland scarce had spoke, but quickly every hill,  
Upon her verge that stands, the neighbouring vallies fill;  
Helvillon from his height it through the mountains threw,  
From whom as soon again the round Dunabrase drew,



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From whose stone-trophied head it on to Wendross went,  
Which towards the sea again resounded it to Dent,  
That Brodwater therewith, within her banks astound,  
In sailing to the sea, told it in Egremound,  
Whose buildings, walks, and streets, with echoes, loud and long,  
Did mightily commend old Copland for her song.'

Again, in a poem of Mr. Wordsworth we find the following lines :—

' When I had gazed perhaps two minutes' space,  
Joanna, looking in my eyes, beheld,  
That ravishment of mine, and laughed aloud.  
The rock, like something starting from a sleep,  
Took up the lady's voice, and laughed again;  
That ancient Woman seated on Helm Crag  
Was ready with her cavern; Hammer-Scar,  
And the tall steep of Silver-How sent forth  
A noise of laughter; southern Loaghrigg heard  
And Fairfield answered with a mountain tone;  
Helvellyn far into the clear blue sky  
Carried the lady's voice;—Old Skiddaw blew  
His speaking-trumpet: back out of the clouds  
Of Giamara southward came the voice;  
And Kirkstone tossed it from his mighty head.  
Now whether this were in simple truth  
A work accomplished by the brotherhood  
Of ancient mountains, or my ear were touched  
With dreams and visionary impulses,  
Is not for me to tell; but sure I am  
That there was a loud uproar in the hills.'

We have been urged several times to take up the subject of Mr. Wordsworth's Poems, in order to do them justice. In doing this, we should satisfy neither his admirers nor his censors. We have once already attempted the thankless office, and it did not succeed. Indeed we think all comment on them superseded by those lines of Withers, which are a complete anticipation of Mr. Wordsworth's style, where, speaking of poetry, he says,—

' In my former days of bliss  
Her divine skill taught me this,  
That from every thing I saw  
I could some invention draw;  
And raise pleasure to her height  
Through the meanest object's sight;—  
By the murmur of a spring,  
Or the least bough's rustling,  
By a daisy whose leaves spread  
Shut when Titan goes to bed;  
Or a shady bush or tree,  
She could more infuse in me  
Than all Nature's beauties can  
In some other wiser man.'

## MR. LOCKE A GREAT PLAGIARIST

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*The Examiner.*

*February 25, 1816.*

MR. LOCKE has at this day all over Europe the character of one of the most profound and original thinkers that ever lived, and he is perhaps, without any exception, the most barefaced, deliberate, and bungling plagiarist, that ever appeared in philosophy. The reputation which he has acquired, as the founder of the new system in philosophy, or of any part of that system, is a pure imposition. Hobbes was the undoubted founder of the system; and he not only laid the foundation, but he completed the building. Every one of the principles of the modern, material philosophy of the mind, is to be found in his works, perfect and entire, as it is in the latest commentators of the French school. He not only took for his basis the principle that there is no other original faculty in the mind but sensation: he also pushed this principle into all its consequences, with a severe, masterly and honest logic, of which there is scarcely any other example. By thus shewing the full extent of his system, 'the very head and front of his offending,' without any disguise, he only got himself an ill name, and his system was consigned to infamy or oblivion. Mr. Locke adopted the first principle, with a clumsy addition to it, but so as to secure himself the reputation of an original thinker; and at the same time, by not following it in a bold and decided manner into any one of its necessary consequences, he avoided giving the alarm to popular apprehension, and made a temporary compromise with the common sense and prejudices of his readers. The door being however opened to the introduction of this philosophy, by the admission of the general principle, all the rest by degrees followed as a matter of course; and it has been the business of the ablest metaphysicians ever since to clear what has been considered as the philosophy of Locke, from the inconsistencies and imperfections which he had suffered to creep into it: all which improvements on Locke's Essay are only a recurrence to the principles laid down by Hobbes, in the most explicit and unequivocal manner. To shew how little this last writer has been read, even by professed metaphysicians, Hume attributes the doctrine, that there are no abstract ideas, to Berkeley as an original discovery, though the arguments used by Berkeley are almost word for word taken from those used by Hobbes on the same subject. Yet Locke, in order we suppose to prevent inquiry into the originality of his own claims, calls Hobbes 'a justly exploded author.' This question is curious (philosophy apart) as a branch of literary history. It is, we know, dangerous to tamper with established reputation; nor should

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we perhaps have ventured to hazard the accusation we have here made, if we had not been supported by the authority of so well informed, candid, and respectable a writer as Dugald Stewart, whose testimony is of the more value, as he does not seem to be aware of the general propensity of Mr. Locke to appropriate the ideas of others to his own use, without disguise or acknowledgement. To any one who takes the trouble to peruse Professor Stewart's very elegant Dissertation just published, on the rise and progress of modern Metaphysics, it will be evident that every one of those original discoveries, to which the author of the Essay on Human Understanding owes his celebrity, and on which he particularly plumed himself, is taken in substance and almost in words from writers of whom he does not once make mention; for example, his proposed division of the sciences, brought forward with great parade and formality, into Physics, Ethics, and Logic, which is the old division of the Greek philosophy; his definition of words which are definable or not definable, which is taken expressly from Descartes; his account of the origin of our ideas, that of association, of the social compact, &c. which are borrowed from Hobbes; his distinction of the properties of matter into primary and secondary, and his theory of consciousness or reflection as a distinct source of ideas, which belong to Descartes; his hypothesis about animal spirits, as the medium of association of ideas, adopted from Malbranche; his account of judgment and wit, which is to be found in Hobbes, &c. &c. If it be asked, whether Mr. Locke has not had the merit of combining the materials thus derived from other sources into a complete and masterly system, the answer would be, that his work is one of the most confused, undigested, and contradictory, that has been published on the subject. There is no one to whom those lines of the poet were ever more applicable.

'Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,  
Nor in the glistening foil  
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies,  
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,  
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove.'

We should hope that Mr. Stewart will examine into and state his conviction on this question fully and clearly in the account of Mr. Locke's Essay, which he has promised in the continuation of his work. If he would lend the sanction of his name to shew the real foundation on which Mr. Locke's reputation rests, it would not be the least service he has rendered to philosophy. 'To trace an error to its source is often the only way to refute it.' The task is no doubt an invidious, but it is a necessary one. The name of Locke

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is in a manner dear to every lover of truth ; but truth itself should be still dearer.

It will perhaps be amusing to the reader (though not initiated in such studies) to see the manner in which an idea is bandied about, in these speculations, from author to author, to no sort of purpose. 'In one of Mr. Locke's most noted remarks' (says the learned Professor), 'he has been anticipated by Malbranche, on whose clear yet concise statement he does not seem to have thrown much new light by his very diffuse and wordy commentary.'—'If in having our ideas in the memory ready at hand, consists quickness of parts ; in this of having them unconfused, and being able nicely to distinguish one thing from another, where there is but the least difference, consists, in a great measure, the exactness of judgment and clearness of reason ; which is to be observed in one man above another. And hence perhaps may be given some reason of that common observation, that men who have a great deal of wit and prompt memories, have not always the clearest judgment or deepest reason. For Wit, lying most in the assemblage of ideas, and putting those together with quickness and variety, wherein can be found any resemblance or congruity, thereby to make up pleasant pictures and agreeable visions in the fancy : Judgment on the contrary, lies quite on the other side, in separating carefully one from another, ideas wherein can be found the least difference, thereby to avoid being misled by similitude and by affinity to take one thing for another.'—*Essay*, &c. B. ii. c. xi. § 2.

'Il y a donc des esprits de deux sortes. Les uns remarquent aisément les différences des choses, et ce sont les bons esprits. Les autres imaginent et supposent de la ressemblance entr'elles, et ce sont les esprits superficielles.'—*Recherche de la Vérité*.

'At an earlier period, Bacon had pointed out the same cardinal distinction in the intellectual characters of individuals.

"The greatest and as it were radical distinction of geniuses, in respect of philosophy and science, is this ; that some are more able and apt at noting the differences of things ; others at noting their similitudes. For steady and acute minds can fix their contemplations, and remain and dwell on every subtlety of distinction ; whereas more lofty and discursive imaginations recognize and compound even the slightest and commonest resemblances of things."

'*That strain I heard was of a higher mood!*—It is evident that Bacon has here seized, in its most general form, the very important truth perceived by his two ingenious successors in particular cases. *Wit*, which Locke contrasts with *Judgment*, is only one of the various talents connected with what Bacon calls the *discursive genius* ; and

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indeed a talent very subordinate in dignity to most of the others.'—*Note to the Dissertation*, p. 116.

Mr. Locke, by Wit, in the passage here referred to, evidently means ingenuity or fancy generally speaking; for in the last hundred years, the use of this term has undergone a great alteration. He however borrowed his definition immediately from 'that exploded author,' Hobbes, who says in the *Leviathan*, p. 32,—'Whereas, in the succession of thoughts, there is nothing to observe in the things we think on, but either in what they be like one another, or in what they be unlike;—those that observe their similitudes, in case they be such as are but rarely observed by others, are said to have a good wit, by which is meant on this occasion a good fancy. But they that observe their differences and dissimilitudes, which is called distinguishing and discerning and judging between thing and thing, in case such discerning be not easy, are said to have a good judgment; and particularly in matters of conversation and business, wherein times, places, and persons, are to be discerned, this virtue is called Discretion.'

What is most remarkable in this traditional definition of wit and judgment, is, that it is altogether unfounded; for as Harris, the author of *Hermes*, has very well observed, the finding out the equality of the three angles of a triangle to two right ones, would, upon the principles here stated, be a sally of wit, instead of an act of the understanding, and Euclid's Elements a collection of *bon mots*.

It may be said in explanation, that wit discovers false resemblances only. But neither is this true. Wit consists in an illustration of an idea by some lucky coincidence or contrast, which idea may be either false or true, as it happens. But the best wit is always the truest. When the French punsters the other day changed the title of some loyal order from *Compagnons du Lys* into *Compagnons d'Ulysse*, the wit lost none of its efficacy, because there was a lurking suspicion in the mind that the insinuation was true. When Mr. Grattan, some years ago, said, that the only resources of Ministers were 'the guinea or the gallows,' the alliteration proved nothing, but neither did it disprove any thing. When the late ingenious Professor Porson, in reply to some enthusiast of the modern school of poetry, who was exclaiming 'that some contemporary bards would be admired when Homer and Virgil were forgotten,' made answer,—'And not till then,'—he shewed more wit, and perhaps not less judgment, than his antagonist. Besides, the wit here consisted in the distinction.

We shall shortly go more into this subject in three papers, which we propose to write, on Imagination, Wit, and Judgment, when we shall endeavour to shew that these faculties, though not the same, nor

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always found together, are not so incompatible as dullness on the one hand, and folly on the other, would lead the world to suppose. The most sensible man of our acquaintance is also the wittiest; and the most extravagant blockhead the dullest matter-of-fact man. The greatest poet that ever lived, had the most understanding of human nature and affairs. Martinus Scriblerus contains the best commentary on the Categories; and we shrewdly suspect that Voltaire and Molière were two as wise men, that is, knew as many things that were true and useful, as Malbranche and Descartes. It would have been hard to persuade either of those laughing philosophers that they saw all things in God, or that animals were machines. These are 'the laborious fooleries' of the understanding.

Mr. Stewart has interspersed his history of the progress of opinions with some interesting biographical sketches. Of Anthony Arnaud, the author of the *Port Royal Logic*, we learn, that 'he lived to the age of eighty-three, continuing to write against Malbranche's opinions concerning *Nature and Grace*, to his last hour.' He died, says his biographer, in an obscure retreat at Brussels, in 1692, without fortune, and even without the comfort of a servant; he, whose nephew had been a minister of state, and who might himself have been a cardinal. The pleasure of being able to publish his sentiments was to him a sufficient recompense. Nicole, his friend and companion in arms, worn out at length with these incessant disputes, expressed a wish to retire from the field, and to enjoy repose. '*Repose!*' replied Arnaud; 'won't you have the whole of eternity to repose in?'—An anecdote which is told of his infancy, when considered in connection with his subsequent life, affords a good illustration of the force of impressions received in the first dawn of reason. He was amusing himself one day with some childish sport, in the library of the Cardinal du Perron, when he requested of the Cardinal to give him a pen:—And for what purpose? said the Cardinal.—To write books, like you, against the Huguenots. The Cardinal, it is added, who was old and infirm, could not conceal his joy at the prospect of so hopeful a successor: and, as he was putting the pen into his hand, said, 'I give it to you as the dying shepherd Damaetas bequeathed his pipe to the little Corydon.' Of the celebrated metaphysician Descartes, it appears that he was 'a bold campaigner' in his youth; that he served in Holland under Prince Maurice of Nassau; in Germany, under Maximilian of Bavaria, in the thirty years' war; in Hungary, and at the siege of Rochelle, as a volunteer against the English. He passed his life in camps till the age of five-and-twenty, when he retired to spend the remainder of it—in proving his own existence! What then, it may be asked after all, is the use of such

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studies and pursuits? Of the same use as pursuing gilded butterflies, or any other toy that amuses the mind. Mr. Hume fixed his residence, while composing his *Treatise of Human Nature*, at the village of La Flèche, where Descartes was brought up. This is an interesting trait in the life of a philosopher, who was by no means of the romantic cast. We do not very well understand the lenity or rather the respect with which the memory of Mr. Hume is always treated by our author, who is so hard upon Hobbes and others. There is also too much notice taken of Adam Smith, who, whatever might be his merits as a political economist, was of a very subordinate class as a philosopher—

‘The tenth transmitter of a foolish creed.’

May we add, that the distinctions of Metaphysics and Geography have nothing in common, nor is truth of any particular country.

The learned Professor makes too little account of the German philosopher Kant, whose maxim that ‘the mind alone is formative,’ is the only lever by which the modern philosophy can be overturned. He has indeed overlaid this simple principle by his logical technicalities, his categories and stuff, as Locke has confounded all common sense with his ideas of sensation and ideas of reflection. Nothing can be done towards a true theory of the mind, till philosophers are convinced that all ideas are ideas of the understanding; and that it requires all the same faculties to have the *idea* of the stud of a brass nail in an old arm-chair, that is, the perception of connection, limits, form, difference, aye, and of abstraction, in this simple object, as in the highest speculations of theological or metaphysical science. The modern philosophers contend that the mind has no idea of any thing but sensible images: the way to turn the tables upon them is then to prove, that in the idea of every one of these sensible objects, there is necessarily involved the exercise of all those faculties, of which they deny the existence, and which are exerted, only in a different degree, in the most simple or the most refined operations of the understanding.

## THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

*The Examiner.*

March 31, 1816.

WE have been required to give proof of Mr. Locke’s want of originality as a metaphysical reasoner, and of the claims of Hobbes to be considered as the founder of the modern system of the philosophy of the human mind.

Here then it is. But at the same time we would observe, that we

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do not think ourselves bound to give this proof to those who have demanded it (somewhat impatiently) at our hands. It was sufficient for us to have stated our opinion on this subject, and to have referred the curious expressly to the sources from which they might satisfy themselves of the truth or hollowness of our assertion. To our readers in general we owe some apology for alluding to such subjects at all. But to the point.—We have said that the principles of the modern school of metaphysics are all to be found, pure, entire, connected, and explicitly stated, in the writings of Hobbes: that Mr. Locke borrowed the leading principle of that philosophy from Hobbes, without understanding or without admitting the system in general, concerning which he always seems to entertain two opinions: that succeeding writers have followed up Mr. Locke's general principle into its legitimate consequences, and have arrived at exactly the same conclusions as Hobbes, but that being ignorant of the name or writings of Hobbes, they have with one accord and with great injustice attributed the merit of the original discovery of that system to Mr. Locke, as having made the first start, and gone further in it than any one else before him.

The principles of the modern system, of which Mr. Locke is the reputed and Mr. Hobbes the real founder, are chiefly the following:—

1. That all our ideas are derived from external objects, by means of the senses alone, and are merely repetitions of our sensible impressions.

2. That as nothing exists out of the mind but matter and motion, so the mind itself, with all its operations is nothing but matter and motion.

3. That thoughts are single, or that we can have only one idea at a time; in other words, that there are no complex ideas in the mind.

4. That we have no general or abstract ideas.

5. That the only principle of connection between one idea and another is *association*, or their previous connection in sense.

6. That reason and understanding are resolvable entirely into the mechanism of language.

7. and 8. That the sense of pleasure and pain is the sole spring of action, and self-interest the source of all our affections.

9. That the mind acts from necessity, and consequently is not a moral or accountable agent.

*(The manner of stating and reasoning on this last point, viz. the moral and practical consequences of the doctrine of Necessity, is the only circumstance of importance, in which the modern philosophers differ from Hobbes.)*

10. That there is no such thing as genius, or a difference in the



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natural capacities or dispositions of men, the mind being originally alike passive to all impressions, and becoming whatever it is from circumstances, &c. &c.

That these are the most striking positions of the moderns with respect to the human mind, is what every one, familiar with the writers since Locke, as Berkeley, Hartley, Hume, Priestley, Horne Tooke, Beddoes, among ourselves, and Helvetius, Condillac, Mirabaud, Condorcet, &c. among the French, will readily allow: that most of them are to be found in the *Essay on Human Understanding*, mixed up in a state of inextricable confusion with common-place and common-sense notions, now advanced, now retracted, the arguments on one side of the question now prevailing through an endless labyrinth of explanation, now those on the other, and now both opinions asserted and denied in the same sentence, is what is equally well known to the readers of Locke and commentators. That the same system came from the mind of Hobbes, not hesitating, stammering, puling, drivelling, ricketty, a sickly half-birth, to be brought up by hand, to be nursed and dandled into common life and existence, but just the reverse of all this, full-grown, completely proportioned and articulated, compact, stamped in all its lineaments with the vigour and decision of the author's mind, is what we have now to shew.

### I. OF SENSATION

'The original of them all (*i.e.* of the thoughts of man), is that which we call *Sense*; for there is no conception in a man's mind, which hath not at first, totally or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of sense. The rest are derived from that original.'—Hobbe's *Leviathan*, chap. I, p. 3.

To this Mr. Locke has made an equivocal addition from Descartes's *Consciousness*, which has been given up by his disciples.

'External material things, as the objects of *SENSATION*, and the operations of our own minds within us, as the objects of *REFLECTION*, are the only originals from whence all our ideas take their beginnings.'—*Essay on Human Understanding*, p. 84.

### 2. OF MIND AND MATTER

'All qualities called *sensible* are, in the object that causeth them, but so many several motions of the matter by which it presseth our organs diversely. Neither in us that are moved are they any thing else but divers motions, for motion produceth nothing but motion.'—*Leviathan*, p. 3.

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‘All fancies are motions within us, reliques of those made in sense.’—*Ibid.*, p. 8.

The inferences of the modern Materialists on this question are well known. Mr. Locke, as usual, flounders between two opinions, and contradicts both sides of the question and himself. He says, for instance,

‘What certainty can any one have, that *some* perceptions, such as pleasure and pain, should not be in *some* bodies themselves, after a certain manner, moved and modified, as that they should be in an immaterial substance upon the motion of the parts of body?’—*Essay*, p. 202, vol. 2.

‘Matter and motion, whatever changes it might produce of figure and bulk, could never produce thought. This can never be the action of bare, insensible matter, without an immaterial thinking being.’—*Ibid.*, p. 318, vol. 1.

### 3. OF ASSOCIATION

‘As we have no imagination whercof we have not formerly had sense, in whole or in parts, so we have no transition from one imagination to another, whereof we never had the like before in our senses.’—*Leviathan*, p. 8.

‘Those motions which succeeded one another in sense, continue together after sense.’—*Ibid.*, p. 8.

‘But because in sense to one and the same thing perceived, some times one thing, some times another succeedeth, it comes to pass in time, that in the imagining of any thing, there is no certainty what we shall imagine next; only this is certain, it shall be something that succeeded the same before, at one time or another.’—*Ibid.*, p. 9.

This passage goes the whole length of Hartley and his followers.

‘The three principles of association mentioned by Mr. Hume, viz. resemblance, contiguity, and cause and effect, are easily resolvable into one general one, the law of association, as laid down by Dr. Hartley, and as depending on the connection of the original sensible impressions.’—Priestley’s *Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever*.

‘Habit is the cause of memory. The brain, like everything else, moves with the greatest readiness in that direction to which it has been accustomed.’—Condillac’s *Logic*, p. 84.

‘Some of our ideas have a natural correspondence and connection one with another. Besides this, there is another con-

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nection of ideas wholly owing to chance or custom. Ideas that in themselves are not at all of kin, come to be so united *in some men's minds*, that it is hard to separate them: all which seems to be but trains of motion of the animal spirits, which, once set agoing, continue afterwards in the same steps they have been used to.'—Locke's *Essay*, p. 446.

See also *Malbranche*, as quoted by Dugald Stewart.

### 4. OF THE UNDERSTANDING

'Besides sense, thoughts, and the train of thoughts, there is no other act of man's mind naturally implanted in him.'—*Leviathan*, p. 11.

'The acts of the mind, wherein it exerts its power over its simple ideas, are chiefly these three:—1. Combining several simple ideas into one compound one, and thus all complex ideas are formed. 2. Bringing two ideas, whether simple or compound, together, and setting them by one another, so as to take a view of them at once, without uniting them into one, by which way it gets all the ideas of relation. 3. Separating them from all ideas that accompany them in their real existence; this is called abstraction, and thus all its general ideas are formed.'—*Essay*, p. 151.

'It is as absurd to talk of a complex idea as of a complex star.'—Mr. Horne Tooke's *Diversions of Purley*, p. 37.

'It is an easy matter upon Mr. Locke's own principles, and a physical consideration of the senses and the mind, to prove the impossibility of the composition of ideas.'—*Ibid.*, p. 39.

'The business of the mind extends no further than to have sensations or feelings. What are called its operations are merely the operations of language. The greatest part of Mr. Locke's *Essay*, all which relates to what he calls the composition, abstraction, complexity, generalisation, relation, &c. of ideas, does indeed merely concern language.'—*Ibid.*, p. 51.

'*Juger est sentir*:' 'Understanding and Sensation are the same thing.'—*Helvetius*, pp. 10, 13, and everywhere.

### 5. OF ABSTRACTION

'Every of which (words), though but one name, is nevertheless the name of divers particular things; in respect of all which together it is called an universal, there being nothing in the world universal but names. One universal name is imposed on many things for their similitude in some quality; and whereas

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a proper name bringeth to mind one thing only universals recall any one of those many.'—*Leviathan*, p. 13.

'The universality of one name to many things hath been the cause that men think the things themselves universal: and so seriously contend, that besides Peter and John, and all the rest of the men that are, have been, or shall be in the world, there is yet something else that we call man, *viz.* man in general; deceiving themselves by taking the universal or general appellation for the thing it signifieth.'—Hobbes's *Human Nature*, p. 26.

'Since all things that exist are only particulars, how come we by general terms? Words become general by being made the signs of abstract ideas.'—Locke's *Essay*, p. 151.

'That then which general words signify is a sort of things; and each of them does that by being the sign of an abstract idea in the mind.'—*Ibid.*, p. 17, vol. 2.

'Universality belongs not to things themselves, which are all of them particular in their existence, even those words and *ideas* which, in their signification, are general. When therefore we quit particulars, the generals that rest are only creatures of our own making, their general nature being nothing but the capacity they are put into by the understanding of signifying or representing many particulars.'—*Ibid.*, p. 15, vol. 2.

'To this (the forgoing opinion of Mr. Locke) I cannot assent, being of opinion that words become general by being made the sign, not of an abstract general idea, but of several particular ideas, any one of which it indifferently suggests to the mind.'—Berkeley's *Introduction to Principles of Human Knowledge*, p. 15.

'A particular idea becomes general by being annexed to a general term.'—Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*, p. 46.

'But what in truth is the reality which a general and abstract idea has in the mind? It is nothing but a name; or if it is any thing more, it necessarily ceases to be abstract and general.'—Condillac's *Logic*, p. 50.

### 6. OF REASONING

'The imagination raised in man by words or voluntary signs, is that we call understanding. By the advantage of names it is that we are capable of science, which beasts, for want of them, are not, nor man without the use of them.'—*Human Nature*, p. 25.

'By this imposition of names, we turn the reckoning of the consequences of things imagined in the mind into a reckoning of the consequences of appellations. A man that hath the use of speech, when he observes that the equality between the three

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angles of a particular triangle and two right ones was consequent, not to the length of the sides, nor to any other particular thing in his triangle, but only to this, that the sides were straight and the angles three, and that that was all for which he named it a triangle, will boldly conclude universally that such equality of angles is in all triangles whatsoever, and register his invention in general terms.'—*Leviathan*, p. 14.

'Though the idea I have in view while I make the demonstration (that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones) be for instance that of an isosceles rectangular triangle, whose sides are of a determinate length, I may nevertheless be certain it extends to all other rectilinear triangles, of what sort or bigness soever. And that because neither the right angle nor the equality nor determinate length of the sides are at all concerned in the demonstration. It is true, the diagram I have in view includes all these particulars; but then there is not the least mention made of them in the proof of the proposition. It is not said the three angles are equal to two right ones, because one of them is a right angle, or because the sides comprehending it are of the same length; which sufficiently shews that the right angle might have been oblique and the sides unequal, and for all that the demonstration might have held good.'—Berkeley's *Introduction to Principles of Human Knowledge*, p. 24.

'Abstract ideas are therefore only denominations. This shews how necessary words are to us; for if we had no general terms, we should have no abstract ideas: if we had no abstract ideas, we should have neither genera nor species; and without genera and species, we could reason upon nothing. But if we can only reason by means of words, the art of reasoning resolves itself into the art of well-speaking. To speak, to reason, to form general or abstract ideas, are then in fact the same thing.'—Condillac's *Logic*, p. 54.

'When the mind cannot so bring its ideas together as by their immediate comparison, and, as it were, juxta-position and application one to another, to perceive their agreement or disagreement, it is fain, by the intervention of other ideas, to discover the agreement or disagreement, which it searches; and this is that which we call reasoning.'—Locke's *Essay*, p. 164, vol. 2.

### 7. and 8. OF MOTIVES OF ACTION

'Pleasure or pain is really nothing but motion about the heart, as conception is nothing but motion in the head. This

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motion, in which consisteth pleasure or pain, is also a solicitation or provocation either to draw near the thing that pleaseth, or to retire from the thing that displeaseth; and this solicitation is the fundamental or internal beginning of animal motion.'—*Human Nature*, p. 300.

'Every man for his own part calleth that which pleaseth and is delightful to himself, good, and that which displeaseth him, evil; insomuch, that while every man differeth from others in constitution, they differ also concerning the common distinctions of good and evil.'—*Ibid.*

'The object of all voluntary pursuit is some good to a man's self.'—*Leviathan*.

'Self-interest is the exclusive and universal principle of action.'—*Helvetius on Man*, p. 14.

'Self-love is the immediate effect of physical sensibility, the only faculty essential to the nature of man.'—*Ibid.*

'The faculty of understanding is nothing but the interest we have to compare different objects.'—*Ibid.*

### 9. OF NATURAL CAPACITY

'By natural capacity, I mean that which a man hath from his birth; for that is nothing else but sense, wherein men differ so little from one another, or from brute beasts, as it is not to be reckoned. But I mean that wit which is gotten by use only and experience, without method, culture, or instruction. This natural wit consisteth principally in two things—celerity of imagining, and steady direction. On the contrary, a slow imagination maketh that defect which is commonly called dullness. And this difference of quickness is caused by the difference of men's passions.'—*Leviathan*, p. 31.

Then follows that definition of Wit and Judgment, which Mr. Locke has so notably transplanted into his Essay.

'The wise convey it call.'<sup>1</sup>

'The senses alone are the gift of nature, on which all our other faculties depend: and the difference of these in minds commonly well organized is so trifling, that all men are capable of the same acquirements, if they have only a passion strong enough to excite equal application.'—*Helvetius on the Mind*, Discourse 3.

<sup>1</sup> Bardolph.

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### 10. OF LIBERTY AND NECESSITY

‘I conceive that nothing taketh beginning from itself, but from the action of some other immediate agent without itself. And that therefore when first a man hath an appetite or will to something to which immediately before he had no appetite nor will, the cause of the will is not the will itself, but something not in his own disposing. So that whereas it is out of controversy that of voluntary actions the will is the necessary cause, and by this which is said, the will is also caused by other things whereof it disposeth not, it followeth that voluntary actions have all of them necessary causes, and are therefore necessitated. I hold that to be an efficient cause, to which nothing is wanting that is needful to the producing the effect. The same also is a necessary cause.’—Hobbes’s *Tripes*, p. 312.

‘The necessity of an action doth not make the laws that prohibit it unjust. When I say the action was necessary, I do not say it was done against the will of the doer, but with his will, and necessarily, because every act of the will had a sufficient and therefore necessary cause. Things may therefore be necessary and yet praiseworthy, as also necessary and yet dispraised; because praise, dispraise, reward and punishment, do by example make and conform the will to good and evil.’—*Ibid.*, p. 290.

What Mr. Locke says on this question is a tedious tissue of contradictions. Indeed his chapter on Power is allowed to be a masterpiece of confusion. What he seems to rest in is the following idea:—

‘In all proposals of present action, a man is not at liberty to will or not to will, because he cannot forbear willing; but the mind having, in most cases, a power to suspend the execution of any of its desires, is at liberty to consider the objects of them, to examine them on all sides, and weigh them with others. In this lies the liberty man has; in this seems to consist that which is (I think improperly) called free-will.’—*Essay*, p. 263.

On this Helvetius remarks:—

‘There are those who regard the suspension of the mind as a proof of liberty; they are not aware that this suspension is as necessary as precipitation of judgment: when through negligence we have been exposed to some misfortune, instructed by experience, self-interest compels us to deliberate.’—*On the Mind*, p. 42.

To what Mr. Hobbes has written on this subject, nothing has been added nor can be taken away. We agree to every word of it, and the more heartily, because it is the only one of all the points which have

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been stated on which we do. In speaking of the popular notions of liberty, in his controversy with a foolish Bishop of that day (Bramhall), he says, 'In fine, that freedom which men commonly find in books, that which the poets chaunt in the theatres, and the shepherds on the mountains, that which the pastors teach in the churches, and the doctors in the universities, and that which the common people in the markets, and all mankind in the whole world do assent unto, is the same that I assent unto, namely, that a man hath freedom to do if he will; but whether he hath freedom to will, is a question which it seems neither the Bishop nor they ever thought on.'—Hobbes was as superior to Locke as a writer, as he was as a reasoner. He had great powers both of wit and imagination. In short, he was a great man, not because he was a great metaphysician, but he was a great metaphysician because he was a great man.

It has been thought, that the neglect into which Hobbes's metaphysical speculations have fallen was originally owing to the obloquy excited by the irreligious and despotical tendency of his other writings. But in this he has also been unfairly dealt with. Locke borrowed his fundamental ideas of government from him; and there is not a word directly levelled at religion in any of his works. At least, his aristocratical notions and his want of religion must have, in some measure, balanced one another; and Charles II. had his picture hanging in his bed-room, though the Bishops wished to have him burnt. The true reason of the fate which this author's writings met with was, that his views of things were too original and comprehensive to be immediately understood, without passing through the hands of several successive generations of commentators and interpreters. Ignorance of another's meaning is a sufficient cause of fear, and fear produces hatred; hence arose the rancour and suspicion of his adversaries, who, to quote some fine lines of Spenser,

'Stood all astonished like a sort of steers  
'Mongst whom some beast of strange and foreign race  
Unawares is chanced far straying from his peers;  
So did their ghastly gaze betray their hidden fears.'

## SHAKESPEAR'S FEMALE CHARACTERS

*The Examiner.*

July 28, 1816.

SHAKESPEAR'S women (we mean those who were his favourites, and whom he intended to be the favourites of the reader) exist almost entirely in the relations and charities of domestic life. They are nothing in themselves, but every thing in their attachment to others.



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We think as little of their persons as they do themselves, because we are let into the secrets of their hearts, which are more important. We are too much interested in their affairs to stop to look at their faces, except by stealth and at intervals. We catch their beauties only sideways as in a glass, but we everywhere meet their hearts coming at us,—*full butt*, as Miss Peggy meets her husband in the Park. No one ever hit the true perfection of the female character, the sense of weakness leaning on the strength of its affections for support, so well as Shakespear—no one ever so well painted natural tenderness free from all affectation and disguise, that

'Calls true love acted simple modesty'—

no one else ever so well shewed how delicacy and timidity, urged to an extremity, grow romantic and extravagant, for the romance of his heroines (in which they abound) is only an excess of the common prejudices of their sex, scrupulous of being false to their vows, truant to their affections, and taught by the force of their feelings when to forego the forms of propriety for the essence of it. His women are in this respect exquisite logicians, for they argue from what they feel, and that is a sure game, when the stake is deep. They know their own minds exactly. High imagination springs from deep habit; and Shakespear's women only followed up the idea of what they liked, of what they had sworn to with their tongues, and what was engraven on their hearts, into its untoward consequences. They were the prettiest little set of martyrs and confessors on record.

We have almost as great an affection for Imogen as she had for Posthumus; and she deserves it rather better. Of all Shakespear's women she is perhaps the most touching, the most tender, and the most true. As to Desdemona, who was alone a match for her in good faith and heroic self-devotion, she had her faults, and she suffered for them. Imogen's incredulity as to her husband's infidelity is much the same as Desdemona's backwardness to believe Othello's jealousy. Her answer to the most distressing part of the picture is only, 'my Lord, I fear, has forgot Britain.' Her readiness to pardon Iachimo's falsehoods, and his designs upon her virtue, is a good lesson to prudes; and shews (as perhaps Shakespear intended it, or nature for him) that where there is a strong attachment to virtue, it has no need to bolster itself up with an outrageous or affected antipathy to vice. The morality of Shakespear in this way is great; but it is not to be found in the four last lines of his plays, in the form of extreme unction. The scene in which Pisanio gives Imogen her husband's letter accusing her of incontinency, is as fine as anything could be:—

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' *Pisanio*. What cheer, Madam?

*Imogen*. False to his bed! What is it to be false?  
To lie in watch there, and to think on him?  
To weep 'twixt clock and clock! If sleep charge nature,  
To break it with a fearful dream of him,  
And cry myself awake? That 's false to 's bed, is it?

*Pisanio*. Alas, good lady!

*Imogen*. I false? thy conscience witness, Iachimo,  
Thou didst accuse him of incontinency,  
Thou then look'dst like a Villain: Now methinks,  
Thy favour 's good enough. Some Jay of Italy,  
Whose mother was her painting, hath betrayed him:  
Poor I am stale, a garment out of fashion,  
And for I am richer than to hang by th' walls,  
I must be ript; to pieces with me. Oh,  
Men's vows are women's traitors. All good seeming  
By thy revolt, oh Husband, shall be thought  
Put on for villainy: not born where 't grows,  
But worn a bait for Ladies.

*Pisanio*. Good Madam, hear me—

*Imogen*. Talk thy tongue weary, speak:  
I have heard I am a strumpet, and mine ear,  
Therein false struck, can take no greater wound,  
Nor tent to bottom that.'——

When *Pisanio*, who had been charged to kill his mistress, puts her in a way to live, she says—

' Why, good fellow,  
What shall I do the while? Where bide? How live?  
Or in my life what comfort, when I am  
Dead to my Husband? '

Yet when he advises her to disguise herself in boy's clothes, and suggests 'a course pretty and full in view,' by which she may 'happily be near the residence of *Posthumus*,' she exclaims—

' Oh, for such means,  
Though peril to my modesty, not death on 't,  
I would adventure.'

And when *Pisanio*, enlarging on the consequences, tells her she must change—

——' Fear and niceness,  
The handmaids of all women, or more truly,  
Woman its pretty self, into a waggish courage,  
Ready in gibes, quick answer'd, saucy, and  
As quarellous as the weazel '—

She interrupts him hastily:—

' Nay, be brief:  
I see unto thy end, and am almost  
A man already.'

## SHAKESPEAR'S FEMALE CHARACTERS

In her journey thus disguised to Milford-Haven, she loses her guide and her way ; and unbosoming her complaints, says beautifully,—

——' My dear Lord,  
Thou art one of the false ones : now I think on thee,  
My hunger 's gone ; but even before, I was  
At point to sink for food.'

She afterwards finds, as she thinks, the dead body of Posthumus, and engages herself as a foot-boy to serve a Roman Officer, when she has done all due obsequies to him whom she calls her former master :

——' And when  
With wild wood-leaves and weeds I ha' strewed his grave,  
And on it said a century of pray'rs,  
Such as I can, twice o'er, I 'll weep and sigh,  
And leaving so his service, follow you,  
So please you entertain me.'

Now this is the very religion of love. Is it not ? All this, which is the essence of the character, is free from every thing like personal flattery or laboured description. She relies little on her personal charms, which she fears may have been eclipsed by some painted jay of Italy ; she relies only on her merit, and her merit is in the depth of her love, her truth and constancy. Our admiration of her beauty is excited as it were with as little consciousness as possible on her part. There are two delicious descriptions given of her, one when she is asleep, and one when she is supposed dead. Arviragus thus addresses her :

——' With fairest flowers,  
While summer lasts, and I live here, Fidele,  
I 'll sweeten thy sad grave ; thou shalt not lack  
The flow'r that 's like thy face, pale primrose, nor  
The azure'd hare-bell, like thy veins, no, nor  
The leaf of eglantine, which not to slander,  
Out-sweeten'd not thy breath.'

The yellow Iachimo gives another thus, when he steals into her bed-chamber :

——' Cytherea,  
How bravely thou becom'st thy bed ! Fresh lily,  
And whiter than the sheets ! That I might touch—  
But kiss, one kiss—'Tis her breathing that  
Perfumes the chamber thus : the flame o' th' taper  
Bows toward her, and would under-peep her lids  
To see th' enclosed lights now canopied  
Under the windows, white and azure, laced  
With blue of Heav'n's own tinct—on her left breast  
A mole cinque-spotted, like the crimson drops  
I' th' bottom of a cowslip.'

## SHAKESPEAR'S FEMALE CHARACTERS

There is a moral sense in the proud beauty of this last image, a rich surfeit of the fancy,—as that well-known passage beginning, 'Me of my lawful pleasure she restrained, and prayed me oft forbearance,' sets a keener edge upon it by the inimitable picture of modesty and self-denial. Desdemona is another instance (almost to a proverb) of the devotedness of the sex to a favourite object. She is 'subdued even to the very quality of her lord,' and to Othello's 'honours and his valiant parts her soul and fortunes consecrates.' The lady protests as much herself, and she is as good as her word. There is not a set description of her in any part of the play; and the only thing that tends that way is the equivocal and somewhat luscious dialogue that takes place between Iago and Cassio as an accompaniment to the ceremonies of the wedding-night. We see her visage in her mind: her character every where predominates over her person:

'A maiden, never bold;  
Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion  
Blush'd at itself.'

She is not a painted idol, carved out of the poet's brain, but is herself a worshipper at the shrine of duty. As Milton dashes the luxurious effect of his descriptions by a moral, Shakespear qualifies it by the interest of the story, as in the scene where Othello takes Desdemona by the hand. The truth of conception, with which timidity and boldness are united in the same character, is marvellous. The extravagance of her actions, the pertinacity of her affections, in a manner arises out of the gentleness of her nature. It is an unreserved reliance on the purity of her intentions, a surrender of her fears to her love, a knitting of herself (heart and soul) to the fate of another. Bating the commencement of her passion, which is a little fantastical and self-willed (though that may be accounted for in the same way from an inability to resist a rising inclination) her whole character consists in having no will of her own, no prompter but her obedience. Her romantic turn is only a consequence of the domestic and practical part of her disposition; and instead of following Othello to Cyprus, she would rather have remained at home, 'a moth of peace,' if her husband could have staid with her. Her resignation and angelic sweetness of nature do not desert her at the last. The scenes in which she laments and tries to account for Othello's harsh usage of her are exquisitely managed. After he has struck her and called her names, she says:

——'Alas, Iago,  
What shall I do to win my lord again?  
Good friend, go to him; for by this light of Heaven,  
I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel;

## SHAKESPEAR'S FEMALE CHARACTERS

If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,  
Either in discourse, or thought, or actual deed,  
Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense  
Delighted them on any other form;  
Or that I do not, and ever did,  
And ever will, though he do shake me off  
To beggarly divorcement, love him dearly,  
Comfort forswear me. Unkindness may do much,  
And his unkindness may defeat my life,  
But never taint my love. . . .

*Iago.* I pray you be content: 'tis but his humour.  
The business of the state does him offence.

*Desdemona.* If 'twere no other.'—

The scene which follows with her maid and the song of the Willow are equally beautiful, and shew Shakespear's extreme power of varying the expression of passion, in all its moods and in all circumstances.

One of the finest passages in Mr. Wordsworth's poems is that where he has given us his opinion of Desdemona :

' Books, dreams, are each a world ; and books, we know,  
Are a substantial world, both pure and good,  
Round which, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,  
Our pastime and our happiness may grow ;

. . . . .  
Matter wherein right voluble I am,  
Two let me mention dearer than the rest,  
The gentle lady wedded to the Moor,  
And heavenly Una with her milk-white lamb.'

We have said enough to explain our idea of the general turn of Shakespear's female characters. We need not mention Ophelia or Cordelia, both of which admit of little external decoration, and which it would seem impossible to treat in any other way than as Shakespear has represented them, abstracted from every thing but their heart-breaking ties to others, if Tate had not adorned the person of Cordelia with a number of beauties, and finished her story with a lover. Cleopatra, who has certainly a personal identity of her own, and who is described in all the glowing pomp of eastern luxury, is not an exception to what we have said, for she is not intended as a model of her sex. What we best recollect of Cressida, is Pandarus's description of her after bringing her to the tent, where he says,—  
' And her heart beats like a new-ta'en sparrow'—which must be allowed to be quite Shakespearian. Miranda appears to be the most conscious of her charms of any of his favourites (perhaps from the very solitude in which she had lived), a sort of miracle of her father's island, and the goddess of her new-found lover's idolatry.

## SHAKESPEAR'S FEMALE CHARACTERS

Perdita is a very pretty low-born lass, the Queen of curds and cream—but she makes us think of other things more than of her face. There is one passage in which the poet has, we suspect, very artfully rallied the indifference of the sex to abstract reasoning :

*' Perdita.* Sir, the fairest flowers o' th' season  
Are our carnations, and streak'd gilly-flowers,  
Which some call Nature's bastards : of that kind  
Our rustic garden 's barren, and I care not  
To get slips of them.

*Polixenes.* Wherefore, gentle maiden,  
Do you neglect them ?

*Perdita.* For I have heard it said,  
There is an art which, in their piedness shares  
With great creating nature.

*Polixenes.* Say, there be,  
Yet nature is made better by no mean,  
But nature makes that mean ; so o'er that art  
Which you say adds to nature, is an art  
That nature makes : you see, sweet maid, we marry  
A gentler scyon to the wildest stock,  
And make conceive a bark of baser kind  
By bud of nobler race. This is an art  
Which does mend nature, change it rather ; but  
The art itself is nature.

*Perdita.* So it is.

*Polixenes.* Then make your garden rich in gilly-flowers,  
And do not call them bastards.

*Perdita.* *I 'll not put  
The dibble in earth, to set one slip of them,' &c.*

Here the lady gives up the argument, but keeps her opinion. We had forgot one charming instance to our purpose, which is the character of Helen in *All's Well that Ends Well* ; and this also puts us in mind that Shakespear probably borrowed his female characters from the Italian novelists, and not from English women.

## ON THE QUESTION WHETHER POPE WAS A POET

*The Edinburgh Magazine.*

February, 1818.

THE question whether Pope was a poet, has hardly yet been settled, and is hardly worth settling ; for if he was not a great poet, he must have been a great prose writer, that is, he was a great writer of some sort. He was a man of exquisite faculties, and of the most refined taste ; and as he chose verse (the most obvious distinction of poetry) as the vehicle to express his ideas, he has generally passed for a poet, and a good one. If, indeed, by a great poet we mean one who gives

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the utmost grandeur to our conceptions of nature, or the utmost force to the passions of the heart, Pope was not in this sense a great poet; for the bent, the characteristic power of his mind, lay the contrary way; namely, in representing things as they appear to the indifferent observer, stripped of prejudice and passion, as in his critical essays; or in representing them in the most contemptible and insignificant point of view, as in his satires; or in clothing the little with mock-dignity, as in his poems of fancy; or in adorning the trivial incidents and familiar relations of life with the utmost elegance of expression, and all the flattering illusions of friendship or self-love, as in his epistles. He was not then distinguished as a poet of lofty enthusiasm, of strong imagination, with a passionate sense of the beauties of nature, or a deep insight into the workings of the heart; but he was a wit, and a critic, a man of sense, of observation, and the world; with a keen relish for the elegancies of art, or of nature when embellished by art, a quick *tact* for propriety of thought and manners, as established by the forms and customs of society, a refined sympathy with the sentiments and habitudes of human life, as he felt them, within the little circle of his family and friends. He was, in a word, the poet not of nature but of art: and the distinction between the two is this. The poet of nature is one who, from the elements of beauty, of power, and of passion in his own breast, sympathises with whatever is beautiful, and grand, and impassioned in nature, in its simple majesty, in its immediate appeal to the senses, to the thoughts and hearts of all men; so that the poet of nature, by the truth, and depth, and harmony of his mind, may be said to hold communion with the very soul of nature; to be identified with, and to foreknow, and to record the feelings of all men, at all times and places, as they are liable to the same impressions; and to exert the same power over the minds of his readers, that nature does. He sees things in their eternal beauty, for he sees them as they are; he feels them in their universal interest, for he feels them as they affect the first principles of his and our common nature. Pope was not assuredly a poet of this class, or in the first rank of it. He saw nature only dressed by art; he judged of beauty by fashion; he sought for truth in the opinions of the world; he judged of the feelings of others by his own. The capacious soul of Shakespeare had an intuitive and mighty sympathy with whatever could enter into the heart of man in all possible circumstances; Pope had an exact knowledge of all that he himself loved or hated, wished or wanted. Milton has winged his daring flight from heaven to earth through chaos and old night; Pope's muse never wandered with safety but from his library to his grotto, or from his grotto into his

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library again. His mind dwelt with greater pleasure on his own garden, than on the garden of Eden; he could describe the faultless whole-length mirror that reflected his own person better than the smooth surface of the lake that reflects the face of heaven; a piece of cut-glass, or a pair of paste buckles with more brilliance and effect than a thousand dew-drops glittering in the sun. He would be more delighted with a patent lamp than with 'the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow,' that fills the skies with its soft silent lustre, trembles through the cottage casement, and cheers the watchful mariner on the lonely wave. In short, he was the poet of personality and of polished life. That which was nearest to him was the greatest: the fashion of the day bore sway in his mind over the immutable laws of nature. He preferred the artificial to the natural in external objects, because he had a stronger fellow-feeling with the self-love of the maker or proprietor of a gew-gaw than admiration of that which was interesting to all mankind alike. He preferred the artificial to the natural in passion, because the involuntary and uncalculating impulses of the one hurried him away with a force and vehemence with which he could not grapple, while he could trifle with the conventional and superficial modifications of mere sentiment at will, laugh at or admire, put them on or off like a masquerade dress, make much or little of them, indulge them for a longer or a shorter time as he pleased, and because, while they amused his fancy and exercised his ingenuity, they never once disturbed his vanity, his levity, or indifference. His mind was the antithesis of strength and grandeur: its power was the power of indifference. He had none of the inspired raptures of poetry: he was in poetry what the sceptic is in religion. It cannot be denied that his chief excellence lay more in diminishing than in aggrandizing objects,—in checking than in encouraging our enthusiasm,—in sneering at the extravagancies of fancy or passion, instead of giving a loose to them,—in describing a row of pins and needles rather than the embattled spears of Greeks and Trojans,—in penning a lampoon or a compliment,—and in praising Martha Blount!

Shakespeare says,—

'In fortune's ray and brightness  
The herd hath more annoyance by the brize  
Than by the tyger: But when the splitting wind  
Makes flexible the knees of knotted oaks,  
And flies fled under shade, why then  
The thing of courage,  
As roused with rage, with rage doth sympathize,  
And with an accent tuned i' th' self-same key,  
Replies to chiding fortune.'

There is hardly any of this rough work in Pope. His muse was



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on a peace establishment, and grew somewhat effeminate by long ease and indulgence. He lived in the smiles of fortune, and basked in the favour of the great. In his smooth and polished verse we meet with no prodigies of nature, but with miracles of wit; the thunders of his pen are whispered flatteries; his forked lightnings playful sarcasms; for the 'gnarled oak' he gives us 'the soft myrtle'; for rocks, and seas, and mountains, artificial grass-plats, gravel-walks, and tinkling rills; for earthquakes and tempests, the breaking of a flower-pot, or the fall of a china-jar; for the tug and war of the elements, or the deadly strife of the passions, we have

'Calm contemplation and poetic ease.'

Yet within this retired and narrow circle, how much, and that how exquisite, was contained! What discrimination, what wit, what delicacy, what fancy, what lurking spleen, what elegance of thought, what refinement of sentiment! It is like looking at the world through a microscope, where every thing assumes a new character and a new consequence,—where things are seen in their minutest circumstances and slightest shades of difference,—when the little becomes gigantic, the deformed beautiful, and the beautiful deformed. The wrong end of the magnifier is, to be sure, held to every thing; but still the exhibition is highly curious, and we know not whether to be most pleased or surprised.

## ON THE OPERA

*The Yellow Dwarf.*

May 23, 1818.

THE Opera is a fine thing: the only question is, whether it is not too fine. It is the most fascinating, and at the same time the most tantalising of all places. It is not the *too little*, but the *too much*, that offends us. Every object is there collected, and displayed in ostentatious profusion, that can strike the senses or dazzle the imagination; music, dancing, painting, poetry, architecture, the blaze of beauty, 'the glass of fashion, and the mould of form'; and yet we are not satisfied—because the multitude and variety of objects distracts the attention, and by flattering us with a vain shew of the highest gratification of every faculty and wish, leaves us at last in a state of listlessness, disappointment, and *ennui*. The powers of the mind are exhausted, without being invigorated; our expectations are excited, not satisfied; and we are at some loss to distinguish an excess of irritation from the height of enjoyment. To sit at the Opera for a whole evening, is like undergoing the process of animal magnetism

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for the same length of time. It is an illusion and a mockery, where the mind is made 'the fool of the senses,' and cheated of itself; where pleasure after pleasure courts us, as in a fairy palace; where the Graces and the Muses, weaving a gay, fantastic round with one another, still turn from our pursuit; where art, like an enchantress with a thousand faces, still allures our giddy admiration, shifts her mask, and again eludes us. The Opera, in short, proceeds upon a false estimate of taste and morals; it supposes that the capacity for enjoyment may be multiplied with the objects calculated to afford it. It is a species of intellectual prostitution; for we can no more receive pleasure from all our faculties at once than we can be in love with a number of mistresses at the same time. Though we have different senses, we have but one heart; and if we attempt to force it into the service of them all at once, it must grow restive or torpid, hardened or enervated. The spectator may say to the sister-arts of Painting, Poetry, and Music, as they advance to him in a *Pas-de-Trois* at the Opera, 'How happy could I be with either, were t'other dear charmer away;' but while 'they all tease him together,' the heart gives a satisfactory answer to none of them;—is ashamed of its want of resources to supply the repeated calls upon its sensibility, seeks relief from the importunity of endless excitement in fastidious apathy or affected levity; and in the midst of luxury, pomp, vanity, indolence, and dissipation, feels only the hollow, aching void within, the irksome craving of unsatisfied desire, because more pleasures are placed within its reach than it is capable of enjoying, and the interference of one object with another ends in a double disappointment. Such is the best account we can give of the nature of the Opera,—of the contradiction between our expectations of pleasure and our uneasiness there,—of our very jealousy of the flattering appeals which are made to our senses, our passions, and our vanity, on all sides,—of the little relish we acquire for it, and the distaste it gives us for other things. Any one of the sources of amusement to be found there would be enough to occupy and keep the attention alive; the *tout ensemble* fatigues and oppresses it. One may be stifled to death with roses. A head-ache may be produced by a profusion of sweet smells or of sweet sounds: but we do not like the head-ache the more on that account. Nor are we reconciled to it, even at the Opera.

What makes the difference between an opera of Mozart's, and the singing of a thrush confined in a wooden cage at the corner of the street? The one is nature, and the other is art: the one is paid for, and the other is not. Madame Fodor sings the air of *Vedrai Carino* in *Don Giovanni* so divinely, because she was hired to sing it; she sings it to please the audience, not herself, and does

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not always like to be *encored* in it; but the thrush that awakes us at daybreak with its song, does not sing because it is paid to sing, or to please others, or to be admired or criticised. It sings because it is happy: it pours the thrilling sounds from its throat, to relieve the overflowings of its own heart—the liquid notes come from, and go to the heart, dropping balm into it, as the gushing spring revives the traveller's parched and fainting lips. That stream of joy comes pure and fresh to the longing sense, free from art and affectation; the same that rises over vernal groves, mingled with the breath of morning, and the perfumes of the wild hyacinth, that waits for no audience, that wants no rehearsing, and still—

'Hymns its good God, and carols sweet of love.'

This is the great difference between nature and art, that the one *is* what the other *seems to be*, and gives all the pleasure it expresses, because it feels it itself. Madame Fodor sings, as a musical instrument may be made to play a tune, and perhaps with no more real delight: but it is not so with the linnet or the thrush, that sings because God pleases, and pours out its little soul in pleasure. This is the reason why its singing is (so far) so much better than melody or harmony, than bass or treble, than the Italian or the German school, than quavers or crotchets, or half-notes, or canzonets, or quartetts, or any thing in the world but truth and nature!

The Opera is the most artificial of all things. It is not only art, but ostentatious, unambiguous, exclusive art. It does not subsist as an imitation of nature, but in contempt of it; and instead of seconding, its object is to pervert and sophisticate all our natural impressions of things. When the Opera first made its appearance in this country, there were strong prejudices entertained against it, and it was ridiculed as a species of the *mock-heroic*. The prejudices have worn out with time, and the ridicule has ceased; but the grounds for both remain the same in the nature of the thing itself. At the theatre, we see and hear what has been said, thought, and done by various people elsewhere; at the Opera, we see and hear what was never said, thought, or done any where but at the Opera. Not only is all communication with nature cut off, but every appeal to the imagination is sheathed and softened in the melting medium of Siren sounds. The ear is cloyed and glutted with warbled ecstasies or agonies; while every avenue to terror or pity is carefully stopped up and guarded by song and recitative. Music is not made the vehicle of poetry, but poetry of music: the very meaning of the words is lost or refined away in the effeminacy of a foreign language. A grand serious Opera is a tragedy wrapped up in soothing airs, to suit the tender feelings of

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the nurselings of fortune—where tortured victims swoon on beds of roses, and the pangs of despair sink in tremulous accents into downy repose. Just so much of human misery is given as is proper to lull those who are exempted from it into a deeper sense of their own security : just enough of the picture of human life is shewn to relieve their languor, without disturbing their indifference ; it is calculated not to excite their sympathy, but ‘ with some sweet, oblivious antidote,’ to pamper their sleek and sordid apathy. In a word, the whole business of the Opera is to stifle emotion in its birth, and to intercept every feeling in its progress to the heart. Every impression that, left to itself, might sink deep into the mind, and wake it to real sympathy, is overtaken and baffled by means of some other impression, plays round the surface of the imagination, trembles into airy sound, or expires in an empty pageant. In the grand carnival of the senses,

‘ The cloister’d heart  
Sits squat at home, like Pagod in a niche  
Obscure ’ ;—

the pulse of life is suspended, the link which binds us to humanity is broken ; the soul is fretted by the sense of excessive softness into a feverish hectic dream ; truth becomes a fable, good and evil matters of perfect indifference, except as they can be made subservient to our selfish gratification ; and there is hardly a vice for which the mind is not thus gradually prepared, no virtue of which it is not rendered incapable !

But what shall we say of the company at the Opera ? Is it not grand, select, splendid, and imposing ? Do we not see there ‘ the flower of Britain’s warriors, her statesmen, and her fair,’ her nobles and her diplomatic characters ? First, we only know the diplomatic characters by their taking prodigious quantities of snuff. As to great warriors, some that we know had better not shew their faces—if there is any truth in physiognomy ; and as to great men, we know of but one in modern times, and neither Europe nor the Opera-house was big enough to hold him. With respect to Lords and Ladies, we see them as we do gilded butterflies in glass cases. We soon get tired of them, for they seem tired of themselves, and one another. They gape, stare, affect to whisper, laugh, or talk loud, to fill up the vacuities of thought and expression. They do not gratify our predilection for happy faces ! But do we not feel the throb of pleasure from the blaze of beauty in the side-boxes ? That blaze would be brighter, were it not quenched in the sparkling of diamonds. As for the rest, *the grapes are sour*. Beauty is a thing that is not made only to be seen. Who can behold it without a transient wish

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to be near it, to adore, to possess it? He must be a fool or a coxcomb, whom the sight of a beauty dazzles, but does not warm; whom a thousand glances shot from a thousand heavenly faces pierce without wounding; who can behold without a pang the bowers of Paradise opening to him by a thousand doors, and barred against him by magic spells!—Bright creatures, fairest of the fair, ye shine above our heads, bright as Ariadne's crown, fair as the dewy star of evening: but ye are no more to us! There is no golden chain let down to us from you: we have sometimes seen you at a play, or caught a glimpse of your faces passing in a coronet-coach; but—As we are growing romantic, we shall take a turn into the *crush-room*, where, following the train of the great statesmen, the warriors, and the diplomatic characters, we shall meet with a nearly equal display of external elegance and accomplishment, without the pride of sex, rank, or virtue! If the women were all Junos before, here they are all Venuses, and no less Goddesses! Those who complained of inaccessible beauty before, may here find beauty more accessible, and take their revenge on the boxes in the lobbies!

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In fine, though we do not agree with a contemporary critic, that the Opera is an entertainment that ought to be held in general estimation, yet we think the present a very proper time for its encouragement. It may serve to assist the *euthanasia* of the British character, of British liberty, and British morals,—by hardening the heart, while it softens the senses, and dissolving every manly and generous feeling in an atmosphere of voluptuous effeminacy.

## GUY FAUX

*The Examiner.*

November 11, 18, and 25, 1821.

GUY FAUX is made into the figure of a scare-crow, a fifth of November bug-bear, in our history. Now that Mr. Hogg's *Jacobite Relics* have dissipated the remains of an undue horror at Popery, it may seem the time to undertake the defence of so illustrious a character, who has hitherto been the victim of party-prejudice and national spite. Guy Faux was a Popish Priest in the reign of James I., and for his unsuccessful attempt to set fire to the House of Lords, and blow up the English Monarchy, the Protestant Religion, and himself, at one stroke, has had the honour to be annually paraded through the streets, and burnt in effigy in every town and village in England from that time to this—that is, for the space of two hundred years and upwards. It is sometimes doubtful,

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indeed, from the coincidence of dates and other circumstances, whether this annual ceremony, accompanied as it is with the ringing of bells, the firing of guns, and the preaching of sermons, is intended more to revive the formidable memory of 'poor Guy,' or in celebration of the glorious landing of William III., who came to deliver us from Popery and Slavery a hundred years afterwards—two things which Mr. Hogg treats as mere *bagatelles* in his *Jacobite Relics*, though they do not appear so in the History of England; and to which the same writer assures us, as an agreeable piece of court-news, that the present Family are by no means averse in their hearts!

Guy Faux was a fanatic, but he was no hypocrite. He ranks among *good haters*. He was cruel, bloody-minded, reckless of all considerations but those of an infuriated and bigotted faith; but he was a true son of the Catholic Church, a martyr and a confessor, for all that. He who can prevail upon himself to devote his life for a cause, however we may condemn his opinions or abhor his actions, vouches at least for the honesty of his principles and the disinterestedness of his motives. He may be guilty of the worst practices, but he is capable of the greatest. He is no longer a slave, but free. The contempt of death is the beginning of virtue. The hero of the Gun-Powder Plot was, if you will, a fool, a madman, an assassin; call him what names you please: still he was neither knave nor coward. He did not propose to blow up the Parliament and come off, scot-free, himself: he shewed that he valued his own life no more than theirs in such a cause—where the integrity of the Catholic faith and the salvation of perhaps millions of souls was at stake. He did not call it a murder, but a sacrifice which he was about to achieve: he was armed with the Holy Spirit and with fire: he was the Church's chosen servant and her blessed martyr. He comforted himself as 'the best of cut-throats.' How many wretches are there that would have undertaken to do what he intended for a sum of money, if they could have got off with impunity! How few are there who would have put themselves in Guy Faux's situation to save the universe! Yet in the latter case we affect to be thrown into greater consternation than at the most unredeemed acts of villany, as if the absolute disinterestedness of the motive doubled the horror of the deed! The cowardice and selfishness of mankind are in fact shocked at the consequences to themselves (if such examples are held up for imitation,) and they make a fearful outcry against the violation of every principle of morality, lest they too should be called on for any such tremendous sacrifices—lest they in their turn should have to go on the forlorn hope

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of extra-official duty. *Charity begins at home*, is a maxim that prevails as well in the courts of conscience as in those of prudence. We would be thought to shudder at the consequences of crime to others, while we tremble for them to ourselves. We talk of the dark and cowardly assassin; and this is well, when an individual shrinks from the face of an enemy, and purchases his own safety by striking a blow in the dark; but how the charge of cowardly can be applied to the public assassin, who, in the very act of destroying another, lays down his life as a pledge and forfeit of his sincerity and boldness, I am at a loss to devise. There may be barbarous prejudice, rooted hatred, unprincipled treachery, in such an act; but he who resolves to take all the danger and odium upon himself, can no more be branded with cowardice, than Regulus devoting himself for his country, or Codrus leaping into the fiery gulf. A wily Father Inquisitor, coolly, and with plenary authority condemning hundreds of helpless and unoffending victims to the flames or to the horrors of a living tomb, while he himself would not suffer a hair of his head to be hurt, is to me a character without any qualifying trait in it. Again; the Spanish conqueror and hero, the favourite of his monarch, who enticed thirty thousand poor Mexicans into a large open building, under promise of strict faith and cordial good-will, and then set fire to it, making sport of the cries and agonies of these deluded creatures, is an instance of uniting the most hardened cruelty with the most heartless selfishness. His plea was keeping no faith with heretics: this was Guy Faux's too; but I am sure at least that the latter kept faith with himself: he was in earnest in his professions. *His* was not gay, wanton, unfeeling depravity; he did not murder in sport; it was serious work that he had taken in hand. To see this arch-bigot, this heart-whole traitor, this pale miner in the infernal regions, skulking in his retreat with his cloak and dark lanthorn, moving cautiously about among his barrels of gunpowder, loaded with death, but not yet ripe for destruction, regardless of the lives of others, and more than indifferent to his own, presents a picture of the strange infatuation of the human understanding, but not of the depravity of the human will, without an equal. There were thousands of pious Papists privy to and ready to applaud the deed when done:—there was no one but our old fifth-of-November friend, who still flutters in rags and straw on the occasion, that had the courage to attempt it. In him stern duty and unshaken faith prevailed over natural frailty. A man to undertake and contemplate with gloomy delight this desperate task, could not certainly in the first instance, be a man of tender sensibility, or over-liable to 'the compunctious visitings of nature'; but he

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would so far only be on a level with many others, and he would be distinguished from them by a high principle of enthusiasm, and a disinterested zeal for truth. Greater love than this has no one, that he shall give up his life for the truth. We have no Guy Fauxes now :—not that we have not numbers in whom ‘the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ We talk indeed of flinging the keys of the House of Commons into the Thames, by way of a little unmeaning splutter, and a little courting of popularity and persecution ; but to fling ourselves into the gap, and blow up the system and our own bodies to atoms at once, upon an abstract principle of right, does not suit the *radical* scepticism of the age !

I like the spirit of martyrdom, I confess : I envy an age that had virtue enough in it to produce the mischievous fanaticism of a Guy Faux. A man’s marching up to a masked-battery for the sake of company, is nothing : but a man’s going resolutely to the stake rather than surrender his opinion, is a serious matter. It shews that in the public mind and feeling there is something better than life ; that there is a belief of something in the universe and the order of nature, to which it is worth while to sacrifice this poor brief span of existence. To have an object always in view dearer to one than one’s-self, to cling to a principle in contempt of danger, of interest, of the opinion of the world,—this is the true *ideal*, the high and heroic state of man. It is in fact to have a standard of absolute and implicit faith in the mind, that admits neither of compromise, degree, nor exception. The path of duty is one, the grounds of encouragement are fixed and invariable. Perhaps it is hardly possible to have such a standard, but where the certain prospect of another world absolves us from a miserly compact with this, and the contemplation of infinity forms an habitual counterpoise to the illusions of time and sense. An object of the highest conceivable greatness leads to unmingled devotion : the belief in eternal truth embodies itself in practical principles of strict rectitude, or of obstinate, but noble-minded error.

There was an instance that happened a little before the time of Guy Faux, which, in a different way, has something of the same character, with a more pleasing conclusion. I mean the story of Margaret Lambrun ; and as it is but little known, I shall here relate it as I find it :—

‘Margaret Lambrun was a Scotchwoman, and one of the retinue of Mary Queen of Scots ; as was also her husband, who dying of grief for the tragical end of that princess, his wife took up a resolution of revenging the death of both upon Queen Elizabeth. For that purpose she put on a man’s habit ; and assuming the name



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of Anthony Sparke, repaired to the Court of the Queen of England, always carrying with her a brace of pistols, one to kill Elizabeth, and the other to shoot herself, in order to avoid the hands of justice; but her design happened to miscarry by an accident, which saved the Queen's life. One day, as she was pushing through the crowd to come up to her Majesty, who was then walking in her garden, she chanced to drop one of the pistols. This being seen by the guards, she was seized in order to be sent immediately to prison; but the Queen, not suspecting her to be one of her own sex, had a mind first to examine her. Accordingly, demanding her name, country, and quality, Margaret replied with an unmoved steadiness,—“Madam, though I appear in this habit, I am a woman; my name is Margaret Lambrun; I was several years in the service of Queen Mary, my mistress, whom you have so unjustly put to death; and by her death you have also caused that of my husband, who died of grief to see so innocent a queen perish so iniquitously. Now, as I had the greatest love and affection for both these persons, I resolved at the peril of my life to revenge their death by killing you, who are the cause of both.”—The Queen pardoned her, and granted her a safe conduct till she should be set upon the coast of France.’

Fanaticism expires with philosophy, and heroism with refinement. There can be no mixture of scepticism in the one, nor any distraction of interest in the other. That blind attachment to individuals or to principles, which is necessary to make us stake our all upon a single die, wears out with the progress of society. Sandt—(the last of that school)—was a religious fanatic—a reader of the book of Maccabees, a repeater of the story of Jael and Sisera, a chaunter of the song of Deborah. What lighted up the dungeon-gloom in which Guy Faux buried himself alive? The face of Heaven open to receive him. What cheered his undivided solitude? The full assembly of Just Men made perfect, the Glorious Company of Apostles, the Noble Army of Martyrs, the expecting Conclave of Sainted Popes, of Canonized Priests and Cardinals. What nerved his steady hand, and prepared it, with temperate, even pulse, to apply the fatal spark? The Hand of the Most High stretched out to meet him and to welcome him into the abodes of the blest—‘Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!’ In his face we see an anticipated triumph that ‘no dim doubts alloy’; he hears with no mortal ears the recording angels ‘quiring to the young-eyed cherubim’; a light flashes round him, a beatific vision, from the wings of the Shining Ones: he sits, wreathed and radiant, in the real presence! What need he fear what men can

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do unto him? To a hope like his, swallowed up in fruition, the shock that is soon to shatter his mortal frame plays harmless as the summer-lightning: the flames that threaten to envelope him are the wedding-garment of the Spouse. 'This night thou shalt sup with me in Paradise'—rings in his sleepless ears. On this rock he builds his faith, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it!—Guy Faux (poor wretch!) was as sure within himself of the reward of his crime in the eternal salvation of his soul, as of his intention to commit it: he no more doubted of another world than he doubted of his own existence. A question whether his whole creed might not be a delusion had never once crossed his mind. How should it? He had never once heard it called in question. He believed in it as he believed in all he had ever seen or heard, or thought or felt, or been told by others—he believed in a future state as he believed in this, with his senses and his understanding, and with all his heart. Poor Guy—that miserable fifth-of-November scarecrow, that stuffed straw figure, flaunting its own periodical disgrace—never once dreamt (oh! glorious inheritance!) that he should die like a dog. Otherwise, James and his parliament would have been in no jeopardy from him. He was not a person of that refinement. He thought for certain that he would go to Heaven or Hell; and he played a bold, but (as he fancied) a sure game, for the former. With such objects at stake, and with his own blinded reason, and a stifled conscience, and implicit faith, and vowed obedience, and holy Mother Church on his side, and a fixed hatred of heresy and of all that belonged to it, as of a strange birth in nature, that made his flesh creep and his brain reel, and a disregard of his own person, as 'dross compared to the glory hereafter to be revealed,' he acted up to his belief: the man was what he preached to others to be—no better, no worse. Without this belief supporting him, what would he have been? Like the wretched straw-figure, the automaton we see representing him, 'disembowelled of his natural entrails, without a real heart of flesh and blood beating in his bosom,' a modern time-server, an unimpassioned slave, a canting Jesuit, a petty, cautious, meddling priest, a safe, underhand persecutor, an anonymous slanderer, a cringing sycophant, promoting his own interest by taking the bread out of honest mouths, a mercenary malignant coward, a Clerical Magistrate, a Quarterly Reviewer, a Member of the Constitutional Association, the concealed Editor of *Blackwood's Magazine*!

The diffusion of knowledge, of inquiry, of doubt (or what Lord Bacon calls 'the infinite agitation of wit') puts an end to 'the soul of goodness' that there is in bigotry and superstition, and should to

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its evil spirit at the same time. There is nothing so intolerable as the union (which we see so common in modern times) of religious hypocrisy with literary scepticism. The real bigot is a respectable as well as enviable character. Not so the affected one. Downright, rooted, rancorous prejudices are honest, hearty, wholesome things. They keep the mind *in breath*. Not so the whining, hollow, designing cant, which echoes without feeling them. The barbarous cruelties of savage tribes are partly atoned for by the keen appetite for revenge in which they originate : but we do not extend the same excuse to those who poison for hire. The fires of Smithfield were kindled by a zeal that burnt as bright and fierce as they. Our contemporaries who are in the habit of throwing firebrands and death, do it without malice ; and laugh at those who do not understand the jest. The multiplication of sects dissipates and tames down the rage of martyrdom. The first grand defection indeed from an established and universal faith, creates a shock and is assailed with a violence proportioned to the firmness with which the parent-belief has been rooted in the public mind : but the subsequent ramification of different schisms and modes of faith from the first enormous heresy, tires out and neutralises the spirit of both persecution and fanaticism. Religious controversy is a war of words, and no longer a war of extermination. There may be the same heart-burnings, the same jealousies of difference of opinion ; but they do not lead to the same fatal catastrophes or the same heroic sacrifices. We cannot burn or hang one another for differing from the Catholic faith as a crime of the most dreadful import, when hardly any two men can be found to agree in the interpretation of the same text. All opinions, by constant collision and attrition, become, if not equally probable, equally familiar. Men's minds are slowly weaned from blind idolatrous bigotry and intolerant zeal, by the continually increasing number of points of controversy and the frequency of dispute. Then comes the general question as to the grounds and reasonableness of the doctrines of religion itself ; and a sceptical dispassionate, Epicurean work, like *Bayle's Dictionary* or *Hume's Essays*, gives the finishing blow to what little remains of dogmatical faith in established systems. After that, a zealot is another name for an imposter. The reasons for belief may be as good or stronger than ever ; but the belief itself, as it is more rational, is less gross and headstrong. The closest deductions of the understanding do not act like an instinct, or warrant a mortal antipathy ; and let the philosophical believer's convictions be what they will, he cannot affect an ignorance that it is possible for others to differ with him. A violent and overstrained affectation of Orthodoxy is, after a certain time, a sure sign of insincerity : the only zeal that can claim to be ' according

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to knowledge,' is refined, calm, and considerate. I do not speak of this sort of mitigated, sceptical, liberalised, enlightened belief, as 'a consummation devoutly to be wished : ' (in my own particular, I would rather have held opinion with Guy Faux, and have gone or sent others to the Devil for that opinion)—I speak of the common course of human affairs. I remember once observing to Wilkie, the celebrated artist, that Dr. Chalmers (his old friend and schoolfellow) had started an objection to the Christian religion, in order to have the credit of answering it. The Scottish Teniers said, that if the answer was a good one, he thought him right in bringing forward the objection. I did not think this remark savoured of the acuteness one would expect from such a man as Wilkie, and only said, I apprehended those opinions were the strongest which had been never called in question. *Reasoning is not believing*—whatever *seeing* may be, according to the proverb.

A devoted and incorrigible attachment to individuals, as well as to doctrines, is weakened by the progress of knowledge and civilization. A spirit of scepticism, of inquiry, of comparison, is introduced there too, by the course of reading, observation, and reflection, which strikes at the root of our disproportionate idolatry. Margaret Lambrun did not think there was such another woman in the world as her mistress, Queen Mary; nor could she, after her death, see any thing in it worth living for. Had she had access to a modern circulating library, she would have read of a hundred such heroines, all peerless alike; and would have consoled herself for the death of them all, one after another, pretty much in the same manner. Margaret was not one of those who argue, according to Mr. Burke's improved political catechism, that 'a king is but a king; a queen is but a woman; a woman is but an animal; and that not an animal of the highest order.' She had more respect of persons than this. The truth is, she had never seen such another woman as her mistress, and she had no means, by books or otherwise, of forming an idea of any thing but what she saw. In that isolated state of society, people grew together like trees, and clung round the strongest for support, 'as the vine curls its tendrils.' They became devoted to others with the same violence of attachment as they were to themselves. Novels, plays, magazines, treatises of philosophy, Monthly Museums, and *Belles Assemblées*, did not fly in numbers about the country and 'through the airy region stream so bright,' as to blot out the impression of all real forms. The effects of habit, of sense, of service, of affection, did not find an ideal level in general literature and artificial models. The heart made its election once, and was fixed till death: the eyes doated on fancied perfection, and were divorced

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from every other object afterwards. There was not the same communication of ideas; there was not the same change of place or acquaintance. The prejudices of rank, of custom, strengthened the bias of individual admiration; and it is no wonder, where all these circumstances were combined, that the presence of a person, whom we had loved and served, became a feeling, an appetite, and a passion in the mind, almost necessary to existence. The taking our idol away (and by cruel and treacherous means) would be taking away the prop that sustained life, and on which all the pride of the affections leant. Its loss would be the loss of another self; and a double loss of this kind (as in the instance alluded to) could seek for no solace but in the death of her who had caused it. Where the mind had become rivetted to a certain object, where it had embarked its all in the sacred cause of friendship and inviolable fidelity, it would be in vain to offer the consolations of philosophy when the heart owned none. Other scenes, new friends, fresh engagements, might be proper for others; but Margaret Lambrun's wounded spirit could find no relief but in looking forward to a full revenge for a murdered mistress and husband. You might as well think of wedding the soul to another body, as of inspiring her with other hopes and thoughts than those which she had lost for ever:—she could not live without those whom she had loved so well and long, and she was ready to die for them. Life becomes indifferent to a mind haunted by a passion of this sort. Death is not then a choice, but rather a necessity. We cannot live, and have the desire nearest to our souls. To play the hero, it is only necessary to be wound up to such an unavoidable interest in any thing, as reflection, prudence, natural instinct, have no power over. To be a hero, is, in other words, to lose the sense of our personal identity in some object dearer to us than ourselves. He may purchase any thing he pleases, who is ready to part with his life for it. Wherever there is a passion or belief strong enough to blind us to consequences, there the mind is capable of any sacrifice and of any undertaking.

The heroical is the fanaticism of common life: it is the contempt of danger, of pain, of death, in the pursuit of a favourite idea. The rule of honour, as of conscience, is to contemplate things in the abstract, and never as affecting or re-acting upon yourself; the hero is an instrument in the hands of fate, and is himself impassive to its blows. A man in a passion, or who is worked up to a certain pitch of enthusiasm, minds nothing else. The fear of death, the love of self, is but an idea or motive with a certain habitual strength. Raise any other idea or feeling to a greater habitual or momentary height, and it will supplant or overrule the first. Courage is sometimes the

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effect of despair. Women, in a fit of romance, or on some sudden emergency, have been known to perform feats of heroic daring, from which men of the stoutest nerves might shrink with dismay. Maternal tenderness is heroic. Affection of any kind, that doats upon a particular object, and absorbs every other consideration in that, is in its nature heroic.<sup>1</sup> Passion is the great ingredient in heroism. He who stops to reflect, to balance one thing against another, is a coward. The better part of valour is indiscretion. All passion is a short-lived madness, or state of intoxication, in which some present impulse or prevailing idea gets uncontroled possession of the mind, and lords it there at will. A man may be (almost literally) drunk with choler, with love, with jealousy, with revenge, as he may with wine or strong drink. Any of these will overpower his reason and senses, and put him beyond himself. The master-feeling will prevail, whatever it is, and when it once gets the upper hand, will rage the more violently in proportion to the obstacles it has to encounter. Women who associate with robbers are cruel, as soon as they get over their first repugnance: some of the bravest officers have been the greatest Martinets. A man who is afraid of a blow, or tender of his person, will yet, on being struck, feel nothing but the mortification of the affront, and the fear of discomfiture. The pain that is inflicted, after his blood is once up, will only aggravate his resentment, and be diverted from the channels of fear into those of rage and shame. He whose will is roused and holds out in this way, whose tenaciousness of purpose and inflammability of spirit are proof against the extremity of pain, of fatigue, and disaster, is said to have *pluck*. So a man may not be able to reason himself into coolness at the commencement of a battle; but a ball whizzing near him does it, by abstracting

<sup>1</sup> There is a common inversion of this opinion, which is *desperation*; or the becoming reckless of all consequences, poverty, disease, or death, from disappointment in some one thing that the mind is set upon, no matter what. A man who has been jilted of his first choice marries out of spite the first woman he meets. A girl, whose sweetheart goes to sea, because she will not have him, as soon as he is gone, and she is baulked of her fancy, runs a-muck at ruin and infamy—

'As men should serve a cucumber,  
She throws herself away!'

Losing gamesters act nearly on the same infatuated principle. Harrel, in *Cecilia*, makes a fine hair-brained mock-heroic exit. I declare I prefer it to the termination of Gray's Bard. Gamesters and highwaymen are so far heroes that it is neck or nothing with them: they set consequences at defiance. Their actions are disinterested; but their motives are not so. A fortune-hunting General stands much in the same predicament. The abstracted, the *ideal*, is necessary to the true heroic. But before a man can fight for an idea, he must have an idea in his head to fight for. Now there are some Generals that are not understood to possess this qualification of the heroic character.

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his imagination from a thousand idle fears, and fixing it on his immediate situation and duty. The novice in an engagement, that before was motionless with apprehension or trembling like a leaf, after being hit, loses the sense of possible contingencies in the grief of his wound, and fights like a devil incarnate. He is thenceforward too busy to think of himself. He rushes fearlessly on danger and on death. A man in a battle is indeed emphatically *beside himself*. He 'bears a charmed life,' that in fancy disarms cannon-balls and bullets of their power to hurt. They are mere names and apparitions from which astonishment and necessity have taken out the sting: the sense of feeling is seared and dead for the time to 'all mortal consequences.' The mind is sublimated to a disregard of whatever can happen, and tempted to rush without provocation on its fate, purely out of bravado, and as the triumph of its paramount feeling, an exasperation of its temporary insanity. Courage is in many such cases only a violent effort to shake off fear, a determination of the imagination to seize on any object that may divert its present dread. A soldier is a perfect hero but that he is a mere machine. He is drilled into disinterestedness, and beaten into courage. He is a very patriotic and romantic automaton. He has lost all regard for himself and concern for others. His life, his limbs, his soul and body, are obedient only to the word of command. 'Set duty in one eye and death in the other, and he can look on death indifferently.'

'Set but a Scotsman on a hill,  
Say such is royal George's will,  
And there 's the foe :  
His only thought is how to kill  
Twa' at a blow.'—*Burns*.

They then go at it with bayonets fixed, eyes inflamed, and tongues lolling out with heat and rage, like wild beasts or mad dogs panting for blood, and from the madman to Mr. Wordsworth's 'happy warrior' there is but one step.—The true hero devotes himself in the same way, but he does it of his own accord, and from an inward sentiment. The service on which he is bound is perfect freedom. He is not a machine, but a free agent. He knows his cue without a prompter. Not servile duty—

'Within his bosom reigns another lord,  
Honour, sole judge and umpire of itself.'

Thus a knight-errant going on adventures, and following out the fine idea of love and gallantry in his own mind, without once thinking of himself but as a vessel dedicated to virtue and honour, is one of the most enviable fictions in the whole world. Don Quixote, in the midst of

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its comic irony, is the finest serious developement to be found of this character. The account of the Cid, the famous Spanish hero, of which Mr. Southey has given an admirable prose-translation where scarcely a word could be changed or transposed without injuring the force and clear simplicity of the antique style he has adopted, abounds with instances to the same purpose. His taking back the lion to its den, his bringing his father 'the herb that would cure him,' his enemy's head, and his manner of reclaiming a recreant knight from his cowardice by heaping the rewards and distinctions of courage upon him, are some of those that I remember as the most striking. Perhaps the reader may not have the book by him; yet they are worth turning to, both for the sentiment and the expression. The first then in order is the following :—

'At this time it came to pass that there was strife between Count Don Gomez the Lord of Gormaz, and Diego Laynez the father of Rodrigo (the Cid); and the Count insulted Diego and gave him a blow. Now Diego was a man in years, and his strength had passed from him, so that he could not take vengeance, and he retired to his home to dwell there in solitude and lament over his dishonour. And he took no pleasure in his food, neither could he sleep by night, nor would he lift up his eyes from the ground, nor stir out of his house, nor commune with his friends, but turned from them in silence as if the breath of his shame would taint them. Rodrigo was yet but a youth, and the Count was a mighty man in arms, one who gave his voice first in the Cortez, and was held to be the best in the war, and so powerful, that he had a thousand friends among the mountains. Howbeit, all these things appeared as nothing to Rodrigo, when he thought of the wrong done to his father, the first which had ever been offered to the blood of Layn Calvo. He asked nothing but justice of Heaven, and of man he asked only a fair field; and his father seeing of how good heart he was, gave him his sword and his blessing. The sword had been the Sword of Mudarra in former times, and when Rodrigo held its cross in his hand, he thought within himself that his arm was not weaker than Mudarra's. And he went out and defied the Count and slew him, and smote off his head, and carried it home to his father. The old man was sitting at table, the food lying before him untasted, when Rodrigo returned, and pointing to the head which hung from the horse's collar, dropping blood, he bade him look up, for there was the herb which would restore to him his appetite; the tongue, quoth he, which insulted<sup>1</sup> you, is no longer a tongue, and the hand which wronged you is no longer a hand. And the old man arose and embraced his son and placed him above him at the table;

<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested whether this phrase 'insulted' is not too modern.



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saying that he who brought home that head should be the head of the house of Layn Calvo.'—*Chronicle of the Cid*, p. 4.

The next is of Martin Pelaez, whom the Cid made of a notable coward a redoubtable hero :—

'Here the history relates, that at this time Martin Pelaez the Asturian came with a convoy of laden beasts, carrying provision to the hosts of the Cid ; and as he passed near the town, the Moors sallied out in great numbers against him ; but he, though he had few with him, defended the convoy right well, and did great hurt to the Moors, slaying many of them, and drove them into the town. This Martin Pelaez, who is here spoken of, did the Cid make a right good knight of a coward, as ye shall hear. When the Cid first began to lay siege to the City of Valencia, this Martin Pelaez came unto him : he was a knight, a native of Santillance in Asturias, a hidalgo, great of body and strong of limb, a well-made man and of goodly semblance, but withal a right coward at heart, which he had shown in many places where he was among feats of arms. And the Cid was sorry when he came unto him, though he would not let him perceive this ; for he knew he was not fit to be of his company. Howbeit, he thought that since he was come, he would make him brave whether he would or not. And when the Cid began to war upon the town, and sent parties against it twice and thrice a day, as ye have heard, for the Cid was always upon the alert, there was fighting and tourneying every day. One day it fell out that the Cid and his kinsmen and friends and vassals were engaged in a great encounter, and this Martin Pelaez was well armed ; and when he saw that the Moors and Christians were at it, he fled and betook himself to his lodging, and there hid himself till the Cid returned to dinner. And the Cid saw what Martin Pelaez did, and when he had conquered the Moors, he returned to his lodging to dinner. Now it was the custom of the Cid to eat at a high table, seated on his bench at the head. And Don Alvar Fannez and Pero Bermudez and other precious knights ate in another part, at high tables full honourably, and none other knights whatsoever dared to take their seats with them, unless they were such as deserved to be there ; and the others who were not so approved in arms ate upon *estrados*, at tables with cushions. This was the order in the house of the Cid, and every one knew the place where he was to sit at meat, and every one strove all he could to gain the honour of sitting to eat at the table of Don Alvar Fannez and his companions, by strenuously behaving himself in all feats of arms ; and thus the honour of the Cid was advanced. This Martin Pelaez, thinking that none had seen his badness, washed his hands in turn with the other knights, and would have taken his place among them. And the Cid went unto him and

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took him by the hand and said, You are not such a one as deserves to sit with these, for they are worth more than you or than me, but I will have you with me; and he seated him with himself at table. And he, for lack of understanding, thought that the Cid did this to honour him above all the others. On the morrow the Cid and his company rode towards Valencia, and the Moors came out to the tourney; and Martin Pelaez went out well armed, and was among the foremost who charged the Moors, and when he was in among them he turned the reins, and went back to his lodging; and the Cid took heed to all that he did, and saw that though he had done badly, he had done better than the first day. And when the Cid had driven the Moors into the town, he returned to his lodging, and as he sate down to meat, he took this Martin Pelaez by the hand, and seated him with himself, and bade him eat with him in the same dish, for he had deserved more that day than he had the first. And the knight gave heed to that saying, and was abashed; howbeit, he did as the Cid commanded him: and after he had dined, he went to his lodging and began to think upon what the Cid had said unto him, and perceived that he had seen all the baseness which he had done; and then he understood that for this cause he would not let him sit at board with the other knights who were precious in arms, but had seated him with himself, more to affront him than to do him honour, for there were other knights there better than he, and he did not show them that honour. Then resolved he in his heart to do better than he had done hitherto. Another day the Cid and his company and Martin Pelaez rode towards Valencia, and the Moors came out to the tourney full resolutely, and Martin Pelaez was among the first, and charged them right boldly; and he smote down and slew presently a good knight, and he lost there all the bad fear which he had had, and was that day one of the best knights there: and as long as the tourney lasted, there he remained fighting and slaying and overthrowing the Moors, till they were driven within the gates, in such manner that the Moors marvelled at him, and asked where that Devil came from, for they had never seen him before. And the Cid was in a place where he could see all that was going on, and he gave good heed to him, and had great pleasure in beholding him, to see how well he had forgotten the great fear which he was wont to have. And when the Moors were shut up within the town, the Cid and all his people returned to their lodging, and Martin Pelaez full leisurely and quietly went to his lodging also, like a good knight. And when it was the hour of eating, the Cid waited for Martin Pelaez, and when he came and they had washed, the Cid took him by the hand, and said, My friend, you are not such a one as deserves to sit with me henceforth, but sit you

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here with Don Alvar Fannez, and with these other good knights, for the good feats which you have done this day have made you a companion for them; and from the day forward he was placed in the company of the good.'—p. 199.

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'There was a lion in the house of the Cid, who had grown a large one, and strong, and was full nimble; three men had the keeping of this lion, and they kept him in a den which was in a court-yard, high up in the palace; and when they cleansed the court, they were wont to shut him up in his den, and afterwards to open the door that he might come out and eat: the Cid kept him for his pastime, that he might take pleasure with him when he was minded so to do. Now it was the custom of the Cid to dine every day with his company, and after he had dined, he was wont to sleep awhile upon his seat. And one day when he had dined, there came a man and told him that a great fleet was arrived in the port of Valencia, wherein there was a great power of the Moors, whom King Bucar had brought over, the sons of the Miramamolin of Morocco. And when the Cid heard this, his heart rejoiced and he was glad, for it was nigh three years since he had had a battle with the Moors. Incontinently he ordered a signal to be made, that all the honourable men who were in the city should assemble together. And when they were all assembled in the Alcazar, and his sons-in-law with them, the Cid told them the news, and took counsel with them in what manner they should go out against this great power of the Moors. And when they had taken counsel, the Cid went to sleep upon his seat, and the Infantes and the others sate playing at tables and chess. Now at this time the men who were keepers of the lion were cleaning out the court, and when they heard the cry that the Moors were coming, they opened the den, and came down into the palace where the Cid was, and left the door of the court open. And when the lion had ate his meat, and saw that the door was open, he went out of the court and came down into the palace even into the hall where they all were: and when they who were there saw him, there was a great stir among them: but the Infantes of Carrion showed greater cowardice than all the rest. Ferrando Gonzalez having no shame, neither for the Cid nor for the others who were present, crept under the seat whereon the Cid was sleeping, and in his haste he burst his mantle and his doublet also at the shoulders. And Diego Gonzalez, the other, ran to a postern door, crying, I shall never see Carrion again! This door opened upon a courtyard, where there was a wine-press, and he jumped out, and by reason of the great height could not keep his feet, but fell among the lees and defiled himself therewith. And all the others who were in the hall

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wrapt their cloaks around their arms, and stood round about the seat whereon the Cid was sleeping, that they might defend him. The noise which they made awakened the Cid, and he saw the lion coming towards him, and he lifted up his hand and said, What is this? . . . and the lion hearing his voice stood still: and he rose up and took him by the mane, as if he had been a gentle mastiff, and led him back to the court where he was before, and ordered his keepers to look better to him for the time to come. And when he had done this, he returned to the hall and took his seat again; and all they who beheld it were greatly astonished.'—p. 251.

The presence of mind, the manly confidence, the faith in virtue, the lofty bearing and picturesque circumstances in all these stories, are as fine as any thing can well be imagined.—The last of them puts me in mind, that that heroic little gentleman, Mr. Kean, who is a Cid too in his way, keeps a lion 'for his pastime, that he may take pleasure with him when he is minded so to do.' It is, to be sure, an American lion, a pumah, a sort of a great dog. But still it shews the nature of the man, and the spirited turn of his genius. Courage is the great secret of his success. His acting is, if not classical, heroic. To dare and to do are with him the same thing. 'Masterless passion sways him to the mood of what it likes or loaths.' He may be sometimes wrong, but he is decidedly wrong, and does not betray himself by paltry doubts and fears. He takes the lion by the mane. He gains all by hazarding all. He throws himself into the breach, and fights his way through as well as he can. He leaves all to his feelings, and goes where they lead him; and he finds his account in this method, and brings rich ventures home.

In reading the foregoing accounts of the Spanish author, it seems that in those times killing was no murder. Slaughter was the order of the day. The blood of Moors and Christians flows through the page as so much water. The proverb uppermost in their minds was, that a man could die but once, and the inference seemed to be, the sooner the better. In these more secure and civilized times (individually and as far as it depends upon ourselves) we are more chary of our lives. We are (ordinarily) placed out of the reach of 'the shot of accident and dart of chance'; and grow indolent, tender, and effeminate in our notions and habits. Books do not make men valiant,—not even the reading the chronicle of the Cid. The police look after all breaches of the peace and resorts of suspicious characters, so that we need not buckle on our armour to go to the succour of distressed damsels, or to give battle to giants and enchanters. Instead of killing some fourteen before breakfast, like Hotspur, we are contented to read of these things in the newspapers, or to see them performed

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on the stage. We enjoy all the dramatic interest of such scenes, without the tragic results. Regnault de St. Jean Angely rode like a madman through the streets of Paris, when from the barricades he saw the Prussians advancing. We love, fight, and are slain by proxy—live over the adventures of a hundred heroes and die their deaths—and the next day are as well as ever, and ready to begin again. This is a gaining concern, and an improvement on the old-fashioned way of risking life and limb in good earnest, as a cure for *ennui*. It is a bad speculation to come to an untimely end by way of killing time. Now, like the heroic personages in *Tom Thumb*, we spread a white pocket-handkerchief to prepare our final catastrophe, and act the *sentiment* of death with all the impunity to be desired. Men, the more they cultivate their intellect, become more careful of their persons. They would like to think, to read, to dream on for ever, without being liable to any worldly annoyance. ‘Be mine to read eternal new romances, of Marivaux and Crebillon,’ cries the insatiable adept in this school. Art is long, and they think it hard that life should be so short. Their existence has been chiefly theatrical, ideal, a tragedy rehearsed in print—why should it receive its *dénouement* in their proper persons, in *corpore vili*?—In another point of view, sedentary, studious people live in a world of thought—in a world out of themselves—and are not very well prepared to scuffle in this. They lose the sense of personal honour on questions of more general interest, and are not inclined to individual sacrifices that can be of no service to the cause of letters. They do not see how any speculative truth can be proved by their being run through the body; nor does your giving them the lie alter the state of any one of the great leading questions in policy, morals, or criticism. Philosophers might claim the privileges of divines for many good reasons; among these, according to Spenser, exemption from worldly care and peril was not the least in monkish lore :

‘From worldly care himself he did esloine,  
And greatly shunned manly exercise :  
For every work he challenged essoine,  
For contemplation-sake.’

Mental courage is the only courage I pretend to. I dare venture an opinion where few else would, particularly if I think it right. I have retracted few of my positions. Whether this arises from obstinacy or strength, or indifference to the opinions of others, I know not. In little else I have the spirit of martyrdom : but I would give up any thing sooner than an abstract proposition.

## PULPIT ORATORY

### PULPIT ORATORY—DR. CHALMERS AND MR. IRVING

*The Liberal.*

July, 1823.

THE Scotch at present seem to bear the bell, and to have 'got the start of the majestic world.' They boast of the greatest novelists, the greatest preachers, the greatest philanthropists, and the greatest blackguards in the world. Sir Walter Scott stands at the head of these for Scotch humour, Dr. Chalmers for Scotch logic, Mr. Owen for Scotch Utopianism, and Mr. Blackwood for Scotch impudence. Unrivalled four! Nay, here is Mr. Irving, who threatens to make a fifth, and *stultify* all our London orators, from 'kingly Kensington' to Blackwall! Who has not heard of him? Who does not go to hear him? You can scarcely move along for the coronet-coaches that besiege the entrance to the Caledonian chapel in Hatton-garden; and when, after a prodigious squeeze, you get in so as to have standing-room, you see in the same undistinguished crowd Brougham and Mackintosh, Mr. Peel and Lord Liverpool, Lord Landsdown and Mr. Coleridge. Mr. Canning and Mr. Hone are pew fellows. Mr. Waithman frowns stern applause, and Mr. Alderman Wood does the honours of the Meeting! The lamb lies down with the lion, and the Millennium seems to be anticipated, in the Caledonian chapel, under the new Scotch preacher. Lords, ladies, sceptics, fanatics, join in approbation,—some admire the doctrine, others the sound, some the picturesque appearance of the orator, others the grace of action, some the ingenuity of the argument, others the beauty of the style or the bursts of passion, some even go so far as to patronize a certain *brackish* infusion of the Scottish dialect, and a slight defect of vision. Lady Bluemount declares it to be only inferior to the EXCURSION in imagination, and Mr. Botherby cries—'Good, good!' The 'Talking Potato'<sup>1</sup> and Mr. Theodore Flash have not yet been.

<sup>1</sup> Some years ago, a periodical paper was published in London, under the title of the Pic-Nic. It was got up under the auspices of a Mr. Fulke Greville, and several writers of that day contributed to it, among whom were Mr. Horace Smith, Mr. Dubois, Mr. Prince Hoare, Mr. Cumberland, and others. On some dispute arising between the proprietor and the gentlemen-contributors on the subject of an advance in the remuneration for articles, Mr. Fulke Greville grew heroic, and said, 'I have got a young fellow just come from Ireland, who will undertake to do the whole, verse and prose, politics and scandal, for two guineas a week, and if you will come and sup with me to-morrow night, you shall see him, and judge whether I am not right in closing with him.' Accordingly, they met the next evening, and the WRITER OF ALL WORK was introduced. He began to make a display of his native ignorance and impudence on all subjects immediately, and no one else had occasion to say any thing. When he was gone, Mr. Cumberland exclaimed, 'A talking potato, by God!' The talking potato was Mr. Croker, of

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Mr. Irving appears to us the most accomplished barbarian, and the least offensive and most dashing clerical holder-forth we remember to have seen. He puts us in mind of the first man, Adam, if Adam had but been a Scotchman, and had had coal black hair. He seems to stand up in the integrity of his composition, to begin a new race of practising believers, to give a new impulse to the Christian religion, to regenerate the fallen and degenerate race of man. You would say he had been turned out of the hands of Nature and the Schools a perfect piece of workmanship. See him in the streets, he has the air, the free swing, the *bolt upright* figure of an Indian savage, or a northern borderer dressed in canonicals: set him in the pulpit, and he is armed with all the topics, a master of fence, the pupil of Dr. Chalmers! In action he has been compared to Kean; in the union of external and intellectual advantages, we might start a parallel for him in the admirable Crichton. He stands before Haydon's picture of Lazarus, and says, 'Look at me!' He crosses Piccadilly, and clears Bond-street of its beaux! Rob Roy, Macbriar is come again. We saw him stretched on a bench at the Black Bull in Edinburgh,—we met him again at a thirteen-penny ordinary in London, in the same attitude, and said, without knowing his calling, or his ghostly parts, 'That is the man for a fair saint.' We swear it by

' His foot mercurial; his martial thigh;  
The brawns of Hercules, but his jovial face! '

Aye, there we stop like Imogen—there is a want of expression in it. 'The iron has not entered his soul.' He has not dared to feel but in trammels and in dread. He has read Werter but to criticise him; Rousseau, but to steel himself against him; Shakespear, but to quote him; Milton, but to round his periods. Pleasure, fancy, humanity, are syrens that he repels and keeps at arms-length; and hence his features are hardened, and have a barbaric crust upon them. They are not steeped in the expression of Titian or Raphael; but they would do for Spagnoletti to paint, and his dark profile and matted locks have something of the grave commanding appearance of Leonardo da Vinci's massive portraits.

Dr. Chalmers is not so good-looking a man as Mr. Irving; he

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the Admiralty. Our adventurer shortly, however, returned to his own country, and passing accidentally through a town where they were in want of a ministerial candidate at an Election, the gentleman of modest assurance offered himself, and succeeded. 'They wanted a Jack-pudding,' said the father of the hopeful youth, 'and so they chose my son.' The case of the Duke of York and Mrs. Clarke soon after came on, and Mr. Croker, who is a dabbler in dirt, and an adept in love-letters, rose from the affair Secretary to the Admiralty, and the very 'rose and expectancy of the fair State.'

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wants the same vigour and spirit. His face is dead and clammy, cold, pale, bloodless, passionless, and there is a glazed look of insincerity about the eyes, uninformed, uninspired from within. His voice is broken, harsh, and creaking, while Mr. Irving's is flowing and silvery : his Scotch accent and pronunciation are a terrible infliction on the *uncultivated* ear. His ' *Which observation I oorge upon you my frinds and breethren* ' desolates and lays waste all the humanities. He grinds out his sentences between his teeth, and catches at truth with his fists, as a monkey catches an apple or a stick thrown at him with his paws. He seems by his action and his utterance to say to difficulties, ' Come, let me clutch thee,' and having got them in his grasp, tears and rends them in pieces as a dog tears an old rag to tatters or mumbles a stone that is flung in his way. Dr. Chalmers engages attention and secures sympathy solely by the intensity of his own purpose : there is neither eloquence nor wisdom, neither imagination nor feeling, neither the pomp of sound nor grace nor solemnity of manner about him, but he is in earnest, and eager in pursuit of his argument, and arrests the eye and ear of his congregation by this alone. He dashes head foremost into the briars and thorns of controversy, and drags you along with him whether you will or no, and your only chance is to push on and get out of them as well as you can, though dreadfully scratched and almost blinded. He involves you in a labyrinth, and you are anxious to escape from it : you have to pass through many a dark, subterranean cavern with him in his theological ferry-boat, and are glad enough to get out on the other side, with the help of Scotch logic for oars, and Scotch rhetoric for sails ! You hear no *home* truths, nothing that touches the heart, or swells or expands the soul ; there is no tide of eloquence lifting you up to Heaven, or wafting you from Indus to the Pole.—No, you are detained in a canal, with a great number of *locks* in it.—You make way by virtue of standing still, your will is irritated, and impelled forward by stoppages—you are puzzled into sympathy, pulled into admiration, tired into patience ! The preacher starts a difficulty, of which you had no notion before, and you stare to see how he will answer it. He first makes you uneasy, sceptical, sensible of your helplessness and dependence upon his superior sagacity and recondite learning, and proportionably thankful for the relief he affords you in the unpleasant dilemma to which you have been reduced. It is like proposing a riddle, and then, after playing with the curiosity and impatience of the company for some time, giving the solution, which nobody else has the wit to find out. We never saw fuller attendances or more profound attention than at the Tron Church in Glasgow—it was like a sea of eyes, a swarm of heads, gaping for mysteries, and



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staring for elucidations—it was not the sublime or beautiful; the secret was that which has been here explained, a desire to get rid of the difficult, the disagreeable, the dry, and the discordant matter that had been conjured up in the imagination. Dr. Chalmers, then, succeeds by the force of sophistry and casuistry, in our humble judgment. Riddles (of which we spoke just now) are generally traditional: those that Dr. Chalmers unfolds from the pulpit, are of his own invention, or at least promulgation. He started an objection to the Christian religion (founded on its supposed inconsistency with the Newtonian philosophy) which objection had never been noticed in books, on purpose that he might answer it. ‘Well,’ said a Scotchman, ‘and if the answer was a good one, was he not right?’ ‘No, assuredly,’ we should answer, ‘for there is no faith so firm as that which has never been called in question.’ The answer could only satisfy those who had been unsettled by the question; and there would be many who would not be convinced by the Doctor’s reasoning, however he might plume himself on his success. We suspect that this is looking after a reputation for literary ingenuity and philosophical depth, rather than the peace of consciences or the salvation of souls; which, in a Christian minister, is unbecoming, and savours of the Mammon of unrighteousness. We ourselves were staggered by the blow (either then or long before) and still gasp for a reply, notwithstanding Dr. Chalmers’s nostrum. Let the reader briefly judge:—The Doctor tells us, it may be said, that the Christian Dispensation supposes that the counsels of God turn upon this world as its center; that there is a heaven above and an earth beneath; and that man is the lord of the universe, the only creature made in the divine likeness, and over whom Providence watches, and to whom revelations are given, and an inheritance everlasting. This agrees with the cosmogony of Moses, which makes the earth the center of all things, and the sun, moon, and stars, little shining spots like silver sixpences moving round it. But it does not so well agree with Newton’s *Principia* (we state Dr. Chalmers’s objection) which supposes the globe we inhabit to be but a point in the immensity of the universe; that ours is but one, and that the most insignificant (perhaps) among innumerable worlds, filled, probably, with created intelligences, rational and fallen souls, that share the eye of God with us, and who require to know that their Redeemer liveth. We alone (it would appear) cannot pretend to monopolize heaven or hell: there are other contingent candidates besides us. Jacob’s dream was poetical and natural, while the earth was supposed to be a flat surface and the blue sky hung over it, to which angels might ascend by a ladder, and the face of God be seen at the top, as his lofty and

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unchangeable abode; but this beautiful episode hardly accords with the Antipodes. Sir Isaac turned the world upon its back, and divided heaven from itself, and removed it far from every one of us. As we thought the universe turned round the earth as its pivot, so religion turned round man as its center, as the sole, important, moral and accountable agent in existence. But there are other worlds revolving in infinite space, to which this is a speck. Are they all desert, worthless? Were they made for us? Have they no especial dispensations of life and light? Have we alone a God, a Saviour, revealed to us? Is religion triumphant only here, or is it itinerant through each? It can hardly seem that we alone have occupied the thoughts or been the sole objects of the plans of infinite wisdom from eternity—that our life, resurrection, and judgment to come, are the whole history of a wide-seeing Providence, or the loftiest events in the grand drama of the universe, which was got up as a theatre only for us to perform our petty parts in, and then to be cast, most of us, into hell fire? Dr. Chalmers's *Astronomical Discourses* indeed may be said to dwarf his mighty subject, and make mankind a very Lilliputian race of beings, which this Gulliver in vain dandles in the hard, broad, brawny hand of school divinity, and tries to lift into their bigotted self-sufficiency and exclusive importance again. How does he answer his own objection, and turn the tables on himself—how reverse this pitiful, diminished perspective, and aggrandise us in our own estimation once more as undoubted heirs of heaven or of hell—the sole favoured or reprobated sons of God? Why, his answer is this—that the microscope has done as much to lift man in the scale of being, and to enlarge the bounds of this atom the earth, as the telescope has done to circumscribe and lessen it; that there are infinite gradations BELOW man, worlds within worlds, as there are degrees of being above, and stars and suns blazing round each other; that, for what we know, a speck, a lucid drop circulating in a flea's back, may be another habitable globe like this!—And has that, too, a revelation of its own, an avenging God, and a Christ crucified? Does every particle in a flea's back contain a Mosaic dispensation, a Popish and a Protestant religion? Has it its Tron Church and its Caledonian Chapel, and Dr. Chalmers's *Discourses* and Mr. Irving's *Orations* in little? This does not seem to obviate the difficulty, but to increase it a million-fold. It is his objection and his answer to it, not ours: if blasphemy, it is his; and, if orthodoxy, he is entitled to all the credit of it. But his whole scheme shows how impossible it is to reconcile the faith delivered to the saints with the subtleties and intricacies of metaphysics. It displays more pride of intellect than simplicity of heart, is an insult equally on the understandings or

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prejudices of men, and could only have been hit upon by that personification and abstraction of cross-purposes, a Scotch metaphysical divine. In his general preaching, Dr. Chalmers is a great casuist, and a very indifferent moralist. He states the *pros* and *cons* of every question with extreme pertinacity, and often ‘spins the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument.’ He assigns possible reasons, not practical motives, for conduct; and vindicates the ways of God, and his own interpretation of the Scriptures, to the head, not to the heart. The old school-divines set this practice afoot; for being accustomed to hear the secrets of confession, and to save the tender consciences of the great and powerful, they had to bandy all sorts of questions about; and if they could find out ‘a loop or peg to hang a doubt on,’ were well rewarded for their trouble; they were constantly reduced to their shifts, and forced to go on the forlorn hope of morality by the ticklish cases referred to them for arbitration; and when they had exhausted the resources of humanity and natural sentiment, endeavoured to find new topics within the range of abstract reason and possibility. Dr. Chalmers’s reasoning is as unlike as possible to a chapter in the Gospels: but he may do very well to comment on the Apocalypse or an Epistle of St. Paul’s. We do not approve of this method of carving out excuses or defences of doctrinal points from the dry parchment of the understanding or the cobwebs of the brain. Whatever sets or leaves the dogmas of religion at variance with the dictates of the heart, hardens the last, and lends no advantage to the first.

Mr. Irving is a more amiable moralist, and a more practical reasoner. He throws a glancing, pleasing light over the gloomy ground of Calvinism. There is something humane in his appeals, striking in his apostrophes, graceful in his action, soothing in the tones of his voice. He is not affected and theatrical; neither is he deeply impassioned or overpowering from the simple majesty of his subject. He is above common-place both in fancy and argument; yet he can hardly rank as a poet or philosopher. He is a modernised covenanter, a sceptical fanatic. We do not feel exactly on sure ground with him—we scarcely know whether he preaches Christ crucified, or himself. His pulpit style has a resemblance to the *florid gothic*. We are a little *mystified* when a man with one hand brings us all the nice distinctions and air-drawn speculations of modern unbelievers, and arms the other with ‘fire hot from hell,’—when St. Paul and Jeremy Bentham, the Evangelists and the Sorrows of Werter, Seneca, Shakespear, the author of Caleb Williams and the Political Justice, are mingled together in the same passage, and quoted in the same breath, however eloquent that breath may be. We see Mr. Irving smile with decent

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scorn at this remark, and launch one more thunderbolt at the critics. He is quite welcome, and we should be proud of his notice. In the discourses he has lately delivered, and which have drawn crowds to admire them, he has laboured to describe the Sensual Man, the Intellectual Man, the Moral Man, and the Spiritual Man; and has sacrificed the three first at the shrine of the last. He gave certainly a terrific picture of the death-bed of the Sensual Man—a scene where few shine—but it is a good subject for oratory, and he made the most of it. He described the Poet well, walking by the mountain side, in the eye of nature—yet oppressed, panting rather than satisfied with beauty and sublimity. Neither Fame nor Genius, it is most true, are all-sufficient to the mind of man! He made a fair hit at the Philosophers; first, at the Political Economist, who draws a circle round man, gives him so many feet of earth to stand upon, and there leaves him to starve in all his nobler parts and faculties: next, at the great Jurisconsult, who carves out a mosaic work of motives for him, cold, hard, and dry, and expects him to move mechanically in right lines, squares, and parallelograms, drills him into perfection, and screws him into utility. He then fell foul of the Moralist and Sentimentalist, weighed him in the balance and found him wanting—deficient in clearness of sight to discern good, in strength of hand and purpose to seize upon it when discerned. But Religion comes at last to the aid of the Spiritual Man, couches the blind sight, and braces the paralytic limb; the Lord of Hosts is in the field, and the battle is won, his countenance pours light into our souls, and his hand stretched out imparts strength to us, by which we tower to our native skies! In treating of this subject, Mr. Irving introduced several powerful images and reflections, to show how feeble moral and intellectual motives are to contend with the allurements of sense and the example of the world. Reason alone, he said, was no more able to stem the tide of prejudice and fashion, than the swimmer with his single arm (here he used an appropriate and spirited gesture, which reminded us of the description of the heroic action of the swimmer in Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*) is able to oppose the raging torrent, as the voice of conscience was only heard in the tumultuous scenes of life like the faint cry of the sea-bird in the wide world of waters. He drew an animated but mortifying sketch of the progress of the Patriot and Politician, weaned by degrees from his attachment to young Liberty to hug old Corruption; and showed (strikingly enough) that this change from youthful ardour to a hoary, heartless old age of selfishness and ridicule (there were several Members of the Honourable House present) was not owing to increased wisdom or strength of sight, but to faltering resolution and weakness of hand,

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that could no longer hold out against the bribes, the snares, and gilded chains prepared for it. The romantic Tyro was right and free, the callous Courtier was a slave and self-conceited. All this was true; it was honest, down-right, and well put. There was no cant in it, as far as regards the unequal odds and the hard battle that reason has to fight with pleasure, or ambition, or interest, or other antagonist motives. But does the objection apply to morality solely, or has not religion its share in it? Man is not what he ought to be—Granted; but is he not different from this ideal standard, in spite of religion as well as of morality? Is not the religious man often a slave to power, the victim of pleasure, the thrall of avarice, hard of heart, a sensual hypocrite, cunning, mercenary, miserable? If it be said that the really religious man is none of these, neither is the truly moral man. Real morality, as well as vital christianity, implies right conduct and consistent principle. But the question simply at issue is whether the profession or the belief of sound moral opinion implies these; and it certainly does it no more than the profession or belief of orthodox religious opinions does. The conviction of the good or ill consequences of our actions in this life does not absolutely conform the will or the desires to good; neither does the apprehension of future rewards or punishments produce this effect completely or necessarily. The candidate for Heaven is a backslider; the dread of eternal torments makes but a temporary impression on the mind. This is not a reason, in our judgment, for neglecting or giving up in despair the motives of religion or morality, but for strengthening and cultivating both. With Mr. Irving, it is a triumphant and unanswerable ground for discarding and denouncing morality, and for exalting religion, as the sovereign cure for all wounds, as the *thaumaturgos*, or wonder-worker, in the reform of mankind! We are at a loss to understand how this exclusive and somewhat intolerant view of the subject is reconcileable with sound reason or with history. Religion is no new experiment now first making on mankind; we live in the nineteenth century of the Christian æra; it is not as if we lived in the age of apostles, when we might (from novelty and inexperience of the intended dispensation of Providence) expect the earth to wear a new face, and darkness suddenly to flee away before the light of the gospel: nor do we apprehend that Mr. Irving is one of those who believe with Mr. Croly, that the millennium actually commenced with the battle of Waterloo; that event seems as far off, to all outward appearance, as it was two thousand years ago. What does this make against the doctrines of christianity? Nothing; if, as far as they are implanted and take root, they bear fruit accordingly, notwithstanding the repugnance and thanklessness of the soil. Why then is

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Mr. Irving so hard upon the labours of philosophers, moralists, and men of letters, because they do not do all their work at once? Bishop Butler indeed wrote a most able and learned quarto volume, to prove that the slow growth and imperfect influence of christianity was a proof of its divine origin, and that in this respect we had a right to look for a direct *analogy* between the operations of the world of grace and nature, both proceeding as they did from the same Almighty hands! Our deservedly popular preacher has, however, an answer to what we have here stated: he says, 'the time **MUST** and **WILL** shortly come!' We never contradict prophecies; we only speak to facts. In addressing himself to this point, Mr. Irving made a spirited digression to the Missionary Societies, and the impending propagation of the Gospel at home and abroad—all obstacles to it would speedily be surmounted:—'The Negro slave was not so enchained but that the Gospel would set him free; the Hottentot was not so benighted but that its light would penetrate to him; the South Sea Islander was not so indolent and voluptuous but that he would rouse himself at its call; neither the cunning of the Italian, nor the superstition of the Spaniard, nor the tameness of the German, nor the levity of the French, nor the buoyancy of the Irish, nor the indomitable pride of the English, nor the *fiery manhood* of the Scotch, would be long able to withstand its all-pervading influence!' We confess, when our Caledonian pastor launched his canoe from the South Sea Isles and landed on European *terra firma*, taking measure of the vices of each nation that were opposed to the spirit of christianity, we did *prick up* our ears to know what fault he would, in due course of argument, find with his native country—it would go against the grain, no doubt, but still he had undertaken it, and he must speak out—When lo! for some sneaking vice or sordid pettifogging disposition, we have our own 'best virtue' palmed upon us as the only failing of the most magnanimous natives of the North—*fiery manhood*, quotha! The cold sweat of rankling malice, hypocrisy, and servility, would be nearer the mark—Eh! Sir Walter? Nay, good Mr. Blackwood, we meant no offence to you! 'Fiery manhood' is the Anti-Christian vice or virtue of the Scotch that meets true religion on the borders, and beats her back with suffocating breath! Is Christianity still then to be planted like oak timber in Scotland? What will Dr. Chalmers and the other labourers in the vineyard say to this?—'We pause for a reply!' The best and most impressive part of Mr. Irving's discourse (Sunday, the 22nd June) was that, in which he gave a very beautiful account of what Christianity had done, or rather might do, in aid of morality and the regeneration of the spirit of man. It had made 'corruption blossom,' 'annihilated time in the prospect

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of eternity,' and 'changed all nature, from a veil hiding the face of God, into a mirror reflecting his power and beneficence.' We do not, however, see why in the fervour of his enthusiasm he should affirm 'that Jesus Christ had destroyed melody,' nor why, by any allowed licence of speech, he should talk of 'the mouth of God being muzzled by man.' We might not perhaps have noticed this last expression, considering it as a slip of the tongue; but Mr. Irving preaches from written notes, and his style is, on the whole, polished and ambitious. We can conceive of a deeper strain of argument, of a more powerful and overwhelming flood of eloquence; but altogether we deem him an able and attractive expounder of Holy Writ; and farther, we believe him to be an honest man. We suspect there is a radical 'taint in him,' and that Mr. Canning will be advised to withdraw himself from the congregation. His strokes aimed at iniquity in high places are bold, unsparing, and repeated. We would however suggest to him the propriety of containing his indignation at the advancement of the secular priesthood by 'the powers that be;' it is a thing of course, and his impatience of their elevation may be invidiously construed into a jealousy of the spoil. When we compare Mr. Irving with some other preachers that we have heard, and particularly with that crawling sycophant Daniel Wilson (who tendered his gratuitous submission to Nero the other day in the excess of his loyalty to George IV.) we are sorry that we have not been able to make our tribute of approbation unqualified as it is cordial, and to stifle *their* venal breath with the applauses bestowed upon *him*. 'Oh! for an *eulogy* to kill' all such with!

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*The Literary Examiner.*

*September-December, 1823.*

I. THE art of life is to know how to enjoy a little and to endure much.

II. Liberty is the only true riches. Of all the rest we are at once the masters and the slaves.

III. Do I not feel this from the least shadow of restraint, of obligation, of dependence? Why then do I complain? I have had nothing to do all my life but to think, and have enjoyed the objects of thought, the sense of truth and beauty, in perfect integrity of soul. No one has said to me, *Believe this, do that, say what we would have you*; no one has come between me and my free-will; I have breathed the very air of truth and independence. Compared with

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this unbiassed, uncontroled possession of the universe of thought and nature, what I have wanted is light in the balance, and hardly claims the tribute of a sigh. Oh! Liberty, what a mistress art thou! Have I not enjoyed thee as a bride, and drank thy spirit as of a wine-cup, and will yet do so to my latest breath!

IV. But is not Liberty dangerous, and self-will excessive? I do not think so: for those who are not governed by their own feelings are led away by prejudice or interest; and reason is a safer guide than opinion, liberty a nobler one than fear.

V. Do I see a Claude? What is there to prevent me from fixing my eye, my heart, my understanding, upon it? What sophist shall deter me from thinking it fine? What is there to make me afraid of expressing what I think? I enter into all its truth and beauty. I wonder over it, I detect each hidden grace, I revel and luxuriate in it, without any doubts or misgivings. Is not this to be master of it and of myself? But is the picture mine? No—oh! yes, ten times over!

VI. That thing, *a lie*, has never come near my soul. I know not what it is to fear to think or to say what I think.

VII. I am choked, pent up in any other atmosphere but this. I cannot imagine how kings and courtiers contrive to exist. I could no more live without daring to speak, to look, to feel what I thought, than I could hold in my breath for any length of time. Nor could I bear to debar others of this privilege. Were it not that the Great would play the part of slaves themselves, they would hate to be surrounded with nothing but slaves, and to see meanness and hypocrisy crawling before them, as much as we do to see a spider crawling in our path.

VIII. I never knew what it was to feel like a footman. How many lords in waiting can say as much?

IX. When I consider how little difference there is in mankind (either in body or mind) I cannot help being astonished at the airs some people give themselves.

X. I am proud up to the point of equality—every thing above or below *that* appears to me arrant impertinence or abject meanness.

XI. The ignorant and vulgar think that a man wants spirit, if he does not insult and triumph over them. This is a great mistake.



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XII. For a man to be a coxcomb, shews a want of imagination. No one will ever pride himself on his beauty who has studied the head of the Antinous, or be in danger of running into the excess of the fashion, who has any knowledge of the Antique. The *ideal* is incompatible with personal vanity.

XIII. A scholar is like a book written in a dead language—it is not every one that can read in it.

XIV. Just as much as we see in others, we have in ourselves.

XV. A painter gives only his own character in a portrait, whether grave or gay, gross or refined, wise or foolish. Even in copying a head, there is some difficulty in making the features unlike our own. A person with a low forehead or a short chin puts a constraint upon himself in painting a high forehead or a long chin. So much has sympathy to do with the operations both of the eye and the hand, with observation and practice!

XVI. People at a play hiss an unsuccessful author or actor, as if the latter had committed some heinous crime—he has committed the greatest crime, that of setting up a superiority over us which he has failed to make good.

XVII. The rich, who do nothing themselves, represent idleness as the greatest crime. They have reason: it is necessary that some one should do something.

XVIII. What a pity that kings and great men do not write books, instead of mere authors! What superior views they must have of things, and how the world would be benefited by the communication!

XIX. The greatest proof of superiority is to bear with impertinence.

XX. No truly great man ever thought himself so.

XXI. Every man, in judging of himself, is his own contemporary.

XXII. Abuse is an indirect species of homage.

XXIII. From the height from which the great look down on the world, all the rest of mankind seem equal.

XXIV. It is a bad style that requires frequent *breaks* and marks of admiration.

XXV. It happens in conversation as in different games. One

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person seems to excel, till another does better, and we then think no more of the first.

XXVI. Those who can keep secrets, have no curiosity. We only wish to gain knowledge, that we may impart it.

XXVII. Genius is native to the soil where it grows—is fed by the air, and warmed by the sun—and is not a hot-house plant or an exotic.

XXVIII. All truly great works of art are *national* in their character and origin.

XXIX. People are distinguished less by a genius for any particular thing, than by a peculiar tone and manner of feeling and thinking, whatever be the subject. The same qualities of mind or characteristic excellence that a man shows in one art, he would probably have displayed in any other. I have heard Mr. Northcote say, that he thought Sir Joshua Reynolds would have written excellent genteel comedies. His *Discourses* certainly are bland and amiable (rather than striking or original) like his pictures.

XXX. The same kind of excellence may be observed to prevail in different arts at the same period of time, as characteristic of the spirit of the age. Fielding and Hogarth were cotemporaries.

XXXI. There is an analogy in the style of certain authors to certain professions. One writes like a lawyer: it seems as if another would have made an eminent physician. Mandeville said of Addison that he was 'a parson in a tye-wig:' and there is something in *The Spectator* to justify this description of him.

XXXII. Salvator Rosa paints like a soldier; Nicholas Poussin like a professor at a University; Guido like a finished gentleman; Parmegiano with something of the air of a dancing-master. Alas! Guido was a gamester and a madman; and Parmegiano a searcher after the philosopher's stone. One of the happiest ideas in modern criticism was that of designating different living poets by the cups Apollo gives them to drink out of: thus Wordsworth is made to drink out of a wooden bowl, Lord Byron out of a skull chased with silver, &c.

XXXIII. Extreme impatience and irritability are often combined with a corresponding degree of indifference and indolence. When the eagerness of pursuit or the violence of opposition ceases, nothing

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is left to interest the mind, that has been once accustomed to a state of morbid excitement.

XXXIV. Artists and other studious professions are not happy, for this reason: they cannot enjoy mental repose. A state of lassitude and languor succeeds to that of overstrained, anxious exertion.

XXXV. It is the custom at present to exclude all but Scientific and Mechanical subjects from our fashionable Public Institutions, lest any allusions to popular sentiments or the cause of humanity should by chance creep in, to the great annoyance of the polite and well-informed part of the audience.

XXXVI. People had much rather be thought to look ill than old: because it is possible to recover from sickness, but there is no recovering from age.

XXXVII. I never knew but one person who had a passion for truth—and only one who had the same regard to the distinction between right and wrong, that others have to their own interest.

XXXVIII. Women are the sport of caprice, the slaves of custom.

XXXIX. When men are not favourites with women, it is either from habits of vulgar debauchery, or from constitutional indifference, or from an overstrained and pedantic idea of the sex, taken from books, and answering to nothing in real life.

XL. The object of books is to teach us ignorance; that is, to throw a veil over nature, and persuade us that things are not what they are, but what the writer fancies or wishes them to be.

XLI. My little boy said the other day, 'He could not tell what to do without a book to read—he should wander about without knowing what to do with himself.' So have I wandered about, till now, and, waking from the dream of books at last, don't know what to do with myself. My poor little fellow! may'st thou dream long amidst thy darling books, and never wake!

XLII. Political truth is a libel; religious truth, blasphemy.

XLIII. The greatest crime in the eye of the world is to endeavour to instruct or amend it.

XLIV. Weighing remote consequences in the mind is like weighing the air in scales.

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XLV. A hypocrite seems to be the only perfect character—since it embraces the extremes of what human nature *is*, and of what it *would be thought*.

XLVI. The Scotch understanding differs from the English, as an Encyclopedia does from a circulating library. An Englishman is contented to pick up a few odds and ends of knowledge; a Scotchman is master of every subject alike. Here each individual has a particular *hobby* and favourite bye-path of his own: in Scotland learning is a common hack, which every one figures away with, and uses at his pleasure.

XLVII. A misanthropic writer might be called *the Devil's amanuensis*.

XLVIII. To be a lord, a papist, and poor, is the most enviable distinction of humanity. There is all the pride and sense of independence, irritated and strengthened by being proscribed by power, and liable to be harassed by petty daily insults from every, the meanest vassal. What a situation to make the mind recoil from the world upon itself, and to sit and brood in moody grandeur and disdain of soul over fallen splendours and present indignities! It is just the life I should like to have led.

XLIX. The tone of good company is marked by the absence of personalities. Among well-informed persons, there are plenty of topics to discuss, without giving pain to any one present—without submitting to act the part of a *butt*, or of that still poorer creature, the wag that plays upon him.

L. Londoners complain of the dullness of the country, and country-people feel equally uncomfortable and at a loss what to do with themselves in town. The fault is neither in the town nor in the country—every one is naturally unsettled and dissatisfied without his usual resources and occupations, let them be *what* or *where* they may.

LI. Each rank in society despises that which is a step below it, and the highest looks down upon them all. To get rid of the impertinence of artificial pretensions, we resort to nature at last. Kings, for this reason, are fond of low company; and lords marry actresses and barmaids. The Duke of York (not the present, but the late King's brother) was at a ball at Plymouth. He danced with a Miss Byron, a very pretty girl, daughter of the admiral of that name, and aunt to our poet. But there was a Mrs. Fanning present, who was a paragon of beauty. The Duke asked, 'Who is

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she?' 'A baker's daughter,' was the answer. 'I don't mean that; but what is she now?'—'A broker's wife.' The lady did not perceive, that to a prince of the blood there was little difference between a tradesman's wife and the daughter of a naval officer; but that the handsomest woman at a ball was an object of admiration in spite of circumstances.

LII. It has been asked, whether Lord Byron is a writer likely to live? Perhaps not: he has intensity of power, but wants distinctive character. In my opinion, Mr. Wordsworth is the only poet of the present day that is likely to live—*should he ever happen to be born!* But who will be the midwife to bring his works to light? It is a question whether Milton would have become popular without the help of Addison; nay, it is a question whether he is so, even with it.

LIII. An anecdote is told of General Wolfe,<sup>1</sup> that he was out with a party of friends in a boat the day before the Battle of Quebec. It was a beautiful summer's evening, and the conversation turned to Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, which was just then published. Wolfe repeated the lines, 'For who to dumb forgetfulness a prey,' &c. with enthusiasm, and said, 'I would rather be the author of those lines than beat the French to-morrow!' He did beat the French, and was himself killed the next day. Perhaps it was better to be capable of uttering a sentiment like this, than to gain a battle or write a poem.

LIV. Authors, a short time since, set upon Government: Government have of late turned the tables on them, and set upon authors. In one respect, it must be confessed, the court-tools have greatly the advantage of us: they can go all lengths in vulgar Billingsgate and abuse, without being charged with vulgarity. They have the sanction of the Court; they plead the King's privilege. It is not to be supposed that any thing inelegant or gross can be patronised at Carlton-house. Every thing about a place, even the convenience of an Admiralty secretary, must, one would think, be kept sweet and wholesome. But instead of the least refinement and polish, they treat us with nothing, but garbage. A lie and a nickname are their favourite figures of rhetoric—the alternate substitutes for wit and argument—the twin-supporters of the Bible and the Crown. They use us (it seems) contrary to the advice of Hamlet, 'according to our own deserts, and not their own dignity.' The dirt they fling sticks on their opponents, without soiling their own fingers. Loyalty

<sup>1</sup> See Mackenzie's *Life of Home*, the author of *Douglas*.

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is 'the true fuller's earth that takes out all stains.' At all events, do or say what they can, it is they who are the *gentlemen*, and we who are the *blackguards*. If we were to call Sir Walter Scott a *Sawney* writer, or Mr. Croker *Jackey*, it would be thought shocking, indecent, vulgar, and no one would look at our publication twice: yet on the Tory side the same thing passes for the height of sense and wit; and ladies of quality are delighted with the *John Bull*, gentlemen read *Blackwood*, and divines take in the *Quarterly*. There is Mr. William Mudford, of the *Courier*—a vapid common-place hack, pert and dull—but who would think of calling him by the diminutive of his Christian name? No; these are the extreme resources reserved for the Court-classics, who, in the zeal of their loyalty, are allowed to forget their manners. There is, in fact, nothing too mean for the genius of these writers, or too low for the taste of their employers.

LV. A Tory can rise no higher than *the assumption of a question*. If he relied on any thing but custom and authority, he would cease to be a Tory. He has a prejudice in favour of certain *things*, and against certain *persons*. This is all he knows of the matter. He therefore gives you assertions for argument, and abuse for wit. If you ask a reason for his opinions, he calls you names; and if you ask why he does so, he proves that he is in the right, by repeating them a thousand times. A nickname with him is the test of truth. It vents his spleen, strengthens his own prejudices, and communicates them mechanically to his hearers.

LVI. When an Elector of Hanover is made into a King of England, what does he become in the course of a century?—A George the Fourth.

LVII. If I were to give a toast at a loyal and patriotic meeting, it should be, *Down with the Stuarts all over the world!*

LVIII. The taste of the great in pictures is singular, but not unaccountable. The King is said to prefer the Dutch to the Italian school of painting; and if you hint your surprise at this, you are looked upon as a very Gothic and *outré* sort of person. You are told, however, by way of consolation, 'To be sure, there is Lord Carlisle likes an Italian picture—Mr. Holwell Carr likes an Italian picture—the Marquis of Stafford is fond of an Italian picture—Sir George Beaumont likes an Italian picture.' These, notwithstanding, are regarded as quaint and daring exceptions to the established rule; and their preference is a species of *lèse-majesté* in the Fine Arts—as great an eccentricity and want of fashionable etiquette, as if any

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gentleman or nobleman still preferred old claret to new, when the King is known to have changed his mind on this subject, or was guilty of the offence of dipping his fore-finger and thumb in the middle of a snuff-box, instead of gradually approximating the contents to the edge of the box, according to the most approved models. One would imagine that the great and exalted in station would like lofty subjects in works of art, whereas they seem to have an exclusive predilection for the mean and mechanical. One would think those whose word is law, would be pleased with the great and striking effects of the pencil :<sup>1</sup> on the contrary, they admire nothing but the little and elaborate. They have a fondness for cabinet or *furniture* pictures, and a proportionable antipathy to works of genius. Even arts with them must be servile, to be tolerated. Perhaps the seeming contradiction may be thus explained. These persons are raised so high above the rest of the species, that the more violent and agitating pursuits of mankind appear to them like the turmoil of ants on a molehill. Nothing interests them but their own pride and self-importance. Our passions are to them an impertinence; an expression of high sentiment they rather shrink from as a ludicrous and upstart assumption of equality. They, therefore, like what glitters to the eye, what is smooth to the touch; but they shun, by an instinct of sovereign taste, whatever has a soul in it, and implies a *reciprocity* of feeling. The gods of the earth can have no interest in any thing human; they are cut off from all sympathy with the 'bosoms and businesses of men.' Instead of requiring to be wound up beyond their habitual feeling of stately dignity, they wish to have the springs of overstrained pretension let down, to be relaxed with 'trifles light as air,' to be amused with the familiar and frivolous, and to have the world appear a scene of *still life*, except as they disturb it! The little in thought and internal sentiment is a necessary relief and set-off to the oppressive sense of external magnificence. Hence Kings babble and repeat they know not what. A childish dotage often accompanies the consciousness of absolute power. Repose is somewhere necessary, and the soul sleeps, while the senses gloat around. Besides, the mechanical and high-finished style of art may be considered as something *done to order*. It is a task to be executed more or less perfectly, according to the price given and the industry of the artist. We stand by, as it were, see the work done, insist upon a

<sup>1</sup> The Duke of Wellington, it is said, cannot enter into the merits of Raphael, but he admires 'the spirit and fire of Tintoret.' I do not wonder at this bias. A sentiment, probably, never dawned upon his Grace's mind; but he may be supposed to relish the dashing execution and *bis or miss* manner of the Venetian artist. Oh, Raphael! well is it that it was one who did not understand thee that blundered upon the destruction of humanity!

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greater degree of neatness and accuracy, and exercise a sort of petty jealous jurisdiction over each particular. We are judges of the minuteness of the details, and though ever so nicely executed, as they give us no ideas beyond what we had before, we do not feel humbled in the comparison. The artisan scarcely rises into the artist; and the name of genius is degraded, rather than exalted in his person. The performance is so far ours that we have paid for it, and the highest price is all that is necessary to produce the highest finishing. But it is not so in works of genius and imagination. Their price is above rubies. The inspiration of the Muse comes not with the *fiat* of a monarch, with the donation of a patron; and therefore the Great turn with disgust or effeminate indifference from the mighty masters of the Italian school because such works baffle and confound their self-will, and make them feel that there is something in the mind of man which they can neither give nor take away.

‘Quam nihil ad tuum, Papiane, ingenium!’

LIX. The style of conversation in request in courts proceeds much upon the same principle. It is low, and it is little. I have known a few persons who have had access to the Presence (and who might be supposed to catch what they could of the tone of royalty at second-hand, bating the dignity—God knows there was nothing of that!) and I should say they were the *highest finishers* in this respect I ever met with. No circumstance escaped them, they worked out all the details (whether to the purpose or not) like a fac-simile, they mimicked every thing, explained every thing; the story was not *told*, but acted over again. It is true, there were no *grandes pensées*, there was a complete truce with all thought and reflection; but they were everlasting dealers in matters of fact, and there was no end of their minute prolixity—one must suppose this mode pleased their betters, or was copied from them. Dogberry’s declaration—‘Were I as tedious as a king, I could find in my heart to bestow it all upon your worship’—is not so much a blunder of the clown’s, as a sarcasm of the poet’s. Are we to account for the effect (as before) from supposing that their overstrained attention to great things makes them seek for a change in little ones?—Or that their idea of themselves as raised above every one else is confirmed by dwelling on the meanest and most insignificant objects?—Or is it that from their ignorance and seclusion from the world, every thing is alike new and wonderful to them? Or that dreading the insincerity of those about them, they exact an extraordinary degree of trifling accuracy, and require every one to tell a story, as if he was giving evidence on oath before a court of justice? West said that the late King used to get him up into a



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corner, and fairly put his hands before him so that he could not get away, till he had got every particular out of him relating to the affairs of the Royal Academy. This weakness in the mind of kings has been well insisted on by Peter Pindar. It is of course like one of the spots in the sun.

LX. I hate to be near the sea, and to hear it roaring and raging like a wild beast in its den. It puts me in mind of the everlasting efforts of the human mind, struggling to be free, and ending just where it began.

LXI. Happy are they that can say with Timon—‘I am Misanthropos, and hate mankind!’ They can never be at a loss for subjects to exercise their spleen upon: their sources of satisfaction must hold out while the world stands. Those who do not pity others, assuredly need not envy them: if they take pleasure in the distresses of their fellow-creatures, they have their wish. Let them cast an eye on that long disease, human life, on that villainous compound, human nature, and glut their malice. There is madness, there is idiotcy, there is sickness, old age, and death; there is the cripple, the blind, and the deaf; there is the deformed in body, the weak in mind, the prisoner and the gaoler, the beggar and the dwarf; there is poverty, labour, pain, ignominy; there is riches, pride, griping avarice, bloated luxury; there is the agony of suffering or the lassitude of *ennui*; there is the sickness of the heart from hope delayed, and the worse and more intolerable sickness from hope attained; there is the gout, the stone, the plague, cold, fever, thirst, and nakedness, shipwreck, famine, fire and the sword, all are instruments of human fate, and pamper the dignity of human nature: there are the racking pains of jealousy, remorse, and anguish, the lingering ones of disappointment, sorrow, and regret; there is the consciousness of unmerited, hopeless obscurity, and ‘the cruel sunshine thrown by fortune on a fool;’ there is unrequited love, and—marriage; there is the coquet slighting others and slighted in her turn, the jilt, the antiquated prude, the brutal husband, and the common-place wife; there are vows of celibacy and lost character; there is the cabal, the idle gossiping, the churlishness and dulness of the country, the heartlessness and profligacy of great cities; there are the listless days, the sleepless nights, the having too much or too little to do; years spent in vain in a pursuit, or, if successful, the having to leave it at last; there are the jealousies of different professions among themselves or of each other, lawyers, divines, physicians, artists; the contempt of the more thriving for the less fortunate, and the hatred and heart-burnings with which it is repaid; there is hypocrisy, oppression,

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falsehood, treachery, cowardice, selfishness, meanness; the luck of fools, the respectability of knaves; the cant of piety, loyalty, and humanity; the lamentations of West-India planters over the ingratitude of their negro slaves, and Louis XVIII. resigning to God and the Mother of all Saints the credit of the success of his arms; there are sects and parties, kings and their subjects, queens and common-council men, speeches in Parliament, plays and actors *damned*, or successful for a time and then laid on the shelf, and heard of no more; quacks at all corners, mountebanks in the pulpit, and drones in the state, peace and war, treaties of offence and defence, conspiracies, revolutions, Holy Alliances, the sudden death of Lord Castlereagh, and the oratory of his successor Mr. Canning, hid for the present like the moon 'in its vacant interlunar cave;' and Ferdinand and his paper-kites, and the Cortes, unconscious of the rebel maxim, 'Catch a king and kill a king'; and Slop raving at the bloodthirsty victims of courtly assassins, and whetting mild daggers for patriot throats; and Mr. Croker's *cheat-the-gallows face* in the *Quarterly*, and Lord Wellington's *heart* in the cause of Spanish liberty, and a beloved Monarch retired amid all this to shady solitude 'to play with Wisdom.' A good hater may here find wherewithal to feed the largest spleen and swell it, even to bursting!

LXII. Happiness, like mocking, is catching. At least, none but those who are happy in themselves, can make others so. No wit, no understanding, neither riches nor beauty, can communicate this feeling—the happy alone can make happy. Love and Joy are twins, or born of each other.

LXIII. No one knows when he is safe from ridicule.

LXIV. Is it a misfortune or a happiness that we so often like the faults of one we love better than the virtues of any other woman; that we like her refusals, better than all other favours; that we like her love of others, better than any one else's love of us?

LXV. If a man were refused by a woman a thousand times, and he really loved her, he would still think that at the bottom of her heart she preferred him to every one else. Nor is this wonderful, when we consider that all passion is a species of madness; and that the feeling in the mind towards the beloved object is the most amiable and delightful thing in the world. Our love to her is heavenly, and so (the heart whispers us) must hers be to us—though it were buried at the bottom of the sea; nay, from the tomb our self-love would revive it! We never can persuade ourselves that a mistress cares nothing about us, till we no longer care about her.

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No ! It is certain that there is nothing truly deserving of love but love, and

‘ In spite of pride, in erring reason’s spite,’

we still believe in the justice of the blind God !

LXVI. It would be easy to forget a misplaced attachment, but that we do not like to acknowledge ourselves in the wrong.

LXVII. A great mind is one that can forget or look beyond itself.

LXVIII. The grand scenes of Nature are more adapted for occasional visits than for constant residence. They are the temples of the Goddess, not fit dwellings for her worshippers. Familiarity breeds contempt or indifference ; and it is better to connect this feeling with the petty and trivial than with the lofty and sublime. Besides, it is unnecessary to run the risk in the latter case. One chief advantage of the great and magnificent objects of Nature is, that they stamp their image on the mind for ever ; the blow need not be repeated to have the desired effect. We take them with us wherever we go ; we have but to think of them and they appear ; and at the distance of half a life or of the circumference of the globe, we unlock the springs of memory, and the tall mountain shoots into the sky, the lake expands its bosom, and the cataract rushes from the pine-clad rock. The bold majestic outline is all that there is to discover in such situations, and this we can always remember. In more cultivated and artificial scenes we may observe a thousand hedge-row beauties with curious eye, or pluck the tender flower beneath our feet, while Skiddaw hovers round our heads, and the echoes of Helvellyn thunder in our hearts.

LXIX. I should always choose to live within reach of a fine prospect, rather than to see one from my windows. A number of romantic, distant objects staring in upon one (uncalled-for) tantalise the imagination, and tempt the truant feet ; whereas, at home, I wish to feel satisfied where I am, and sheltered from the world.

LXX. Mr. Martin’s picture of Adam and Eve in Paradise has this capital defect, that there is no *repose* in it. You see two insignificant naked figures, and a preposterous architectural landscape, like a range of buildings overlooking them. They might as well be represented sleeping on the top of the pinnacle of the Temple with the world and all the glories thereof spread out before them. They ought to have been painted imparadised in one another’s arms, shut up in measureless content, with Eden’s choicest bowers closing

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round them, and Nature stooping to clothe them with vernal flowers. Nothing could be too retired, too voluptuous, too sacred from day's garish eye: instead of which, you have a gaudy panoramic view, a glittering barren waste, a triple row of clouds, of rocks, and mountains piled one upon the other, as if the imagination already bent its idle gaze over that wide world, which was so soon to be their place of exile, and the aching restless spirit of the artist was occupied in building a stately prison for our first parents, instead of decking their bridal bed, and wrapping them in a short-lived dream of bliss!

LXXI. The mind tires of variety, but becomes reconciled to uniformity. Change produces a restless habit, a love of farther change: the recurrence of the same objects conduces to repose, and to content. My Uncle Toby's bowling-green bounded his harmless ambition; Bonaparte, not contented with France and Europe for a pleasure-ground, wanted to have Russia for an ice-house; and Alexander, at the farthest side of India, wept for new worlds to conquer. If we let our thoughts wander abroad, there is no end to fantastic projects, to the craving after novelty, to fickleness, and disappointment: if we confine them at home, Peace may find them there. Mr. Horne Tooke used to contend that all tendency to excess was voluntary in the mind: the wants of Nature kept within a certain limit. Even if a person adhered to a regular number of cups of tea or glasses of wine, he did not feel tempted to exceed this number: but if he once went beyond his usual allowance, the desire to transgress increased with its indulgence, and the artificial appetite was proportioned to the artificial stimulus. It has been remarked that in the tropical climates, where there is no difference of seasons, time passes away on smoother and swifter pinions, 'the earth spins round on its soft axle,' unnoticed, unregretted: and life wears out soonest and best in sequestered privacy, within the round of a few, simple, unenvied enjoyments.

LXXII. The retailing of a set of anecdotes is not conversation. A story admits of no answer: a remark or an opinion naturally calls forth another, and leads to as many different views of a subject as there are minds in company. An officer in a Scotch marching regiment has always a number of very edifying anecdotes to communicate: but unless you are of the same mess or the same clan, you are necessarily *sent to Coventry*. Prosing, mechanical narrations of this kind are tedious, as well as tinctured with egotism: if they are set off with a brilliant manner, with mimicry, and action, they become theatrical: the speaker is a kind of *Mr. Matthews at home*, and the audience are more or less delighted and amused with the exhibition;

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but there is an end of society, and you no more think of interrupting a confirmed story-teller, than you would of interrupting a favourite actor on the stage.

LXXIII. The Queen's trial gave a deathblow to the hopes of all reflecting persons with respect to the springs and issues of public spirit and opinion. It was the only question I ever knew that excited a thorough popular feeling. It struck its roots into the heart of the nation; it took possession of every house or cottage in the kingdom; man, woman, and child took part in it, as if it had been their own concern. Business was laid aside for it: people forgot their pleasures, even their meals were neglected, nothing was thought of but the fate of the Queen's trial. The arrival of the *Times Newspaper* was looked upon as an event in every village, the Mails hardly travelled fast enough; and he who had the latest intelligence in his pocket was considered as the happiest of mortals. It kept the town in a ferment for several weeks: it agitated the country to the remotest corner. It spread like wildfire over the kingdom; the public mind was electrical. So it should be on other occasions; it was only so on this. An individual may be oppressed, a nation may be trampled upon, mankind may be threatened with annihilation of their rights, and the threat enforced; and not a finger is raised, not a heart sinks, not a pulse beats quicker in the public or private quarrel, a momentary burst of vain indignation is heard, dies away, and is forgotten. Truth has no echo, but folly and imposture have a thousand reverberations in the hollowness of the human heart. At the very time when all England went mad about the poor Queen, a man of the name of Bruce was sent to Botany Bay for having spoken to another who was convicted of sedition; and no notice was taken of it. We have seen what has been done in Spain, and Earth does not roll its billows over the heads of tyrants, to bury them in a common grave. What was it then in the Queen's cause that stirred this mighty 'coil and pudder' in the breast? Was it the love of truth, of justice, of liberty? No such thing! Her case was at best doubtful, and she had only suffered the loss of privileges peculiar to herself. But she was a Queen, she was a woman, and a *thorn in the King's side*. There was the cant of loyalty, the cant of gallantry, and the cant of freedom mixed altogether in delightful and inextricable confusion. She was a Queen—all the loyal and well-bred bowed to the name; she was a wife—all the women took the alarm; she was at variance with the lawful sovereign—all the free and independent Electors of Westminster and London were up in arms. 'The Queen's name was a tower of strength,' which these persons had hitherto wanted, and were glad to catch at.

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Though a daughter of the Duke of Brunswick, though a granddaughter of George III., yet because she was separated from her husband, she must be hand-and-glove with the people, the wretched, helpless, doating, credulous, meddlesome people, who are always ready to lick the hands, not just then raised to shed their blood or rivet on their chains. There was here an idol to pull down and an idol to set up. There was an imperial title and meretricious frontispiece to the spurious volume of Liberty. There was the mock-majesty of an empty throne behind the real one, and the impertinence of mankind was interested to thrust the unwelcome claimant into it. City patriots stood a chance of becoming liege men, and true to a Queen—of their own choosing. The spirit of faction was half merged in the spirit of servility. There was a rag-fair of royalty—every one carried his own paints and patches into the presence of the new Lady of Loretto—there was a sense of homage due, of services and countenance bestowed on Majesty. This popular farce had all the charm of *private theatricals*. The Court of St. James's was nothing to the *make-believe* Court at Kew. The king was a sort of *state-fixtured*; but the Queen-Consort, the favourite of the rabble, was herself one of them. The presence-doors were flung open, and every blackguard and blockhead rushed in. What an opportunity to see, to hear, to touch a Queen! To gratify the itch of loyalty by coming in contact with the person of the Sovereign was a privilege reserved for a few; but to receive this favour at the Queen's hands was a distinction common to all. All the trades of London came to kiss the Queen's hand: Presbyterian parsons knelt to kiss the hand of their royal mistress; the daughters of country curates and of city knights sipped loyalty from the back of her Majesty's hand. Radicals and reformers contended who should be first in paying homage to the Queen; there was a race for precedence, quarrelling and pulling of caps between the wives of distinguished orators and caricaturists, at the very footsteps of the throne; while Mr. Alderman Wood,

‘A gentle Husher, Vanity by name.’

strove to keep the peace, and vindicate the character of civic dames for courtly manners. Mr. Place, Mr. Hone, Mr. Thelwall, Sir Richard Phillips, kissed her Majesty's hand; Mr. Cobbett alone was not invited,—it was thought he might *bite*. What a pity that it was before Mr. Irving's time, or he might have thrown in the casting-weight of his perfect mind and body, and *ousted* both the King and Bergami! In the midst of all this, his Majesty went to the play, bowed to the boxes, the pit, the gallery, and to the *actors*, and you would suppose in four days' time, that a whisper had never been uttered

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to imply that the King not only was not the most graceful man in his dominions, but the best of monarchs and of husbands. The Queen and her *pic-nic* parties were no more thought of. What a scene for history to laugh at !

LXXIV. A crowd was collected under the Horse-Guards, and on enquiry I found it was to see the Duke of York come out. 'What went they forth for to see?' They were some of the lowest and most wretched of the people, and it was perhaps the sense of contrast, —a sense of which the great and mighty have always availed themselves liberally, to cherish the enthusiasm of their admirers. It was also curiosity to see a name, a sound that they had so often heard, reduced to an object of sight; a metaphysical and political abstraction actually coming out of a door with a ruddy face and a frock-coat. It was, in the first place, the Commander-in-Chief, and the commander of the troops at Dunkirk, the author of the love-letters to Mrs. Clarke and of army-circulars, the son of the King, and presumptive heir to the Crown;—there were all these contradictions embodied in the same person. 'Oh, the wonderful works of nature,' as the *Recruit* in the play says on looking at the guinea which has just enlisted him: so we may say on looking at a king or a king's brother. I once pointed out the Duke of York to a Scotchman. 'Is that his Grace—I mean his Royal Highness?' said the native of the North, out of breath to acknowledge the title, and pay with his tongue the instinctive adulation which his heart felt !

LXXV. When Effie Deans becomes a fine lady, do we not look back with regret to the time when she was the poor faded lily of St. Leonards, the outcast and condemned prisoner? So, should the cause of liberty and mankind ever become triumphant, instead of militant, may we not heave a sigh of regret over the past, and think that poor suffering human nature, with all its wrongs and insults, trodden into the earth like a vile weed, was a more interesting topic for reflection? We need not be much alarmed for the event, even if this should be so; for the way to Utopia is not 'the primrose path of dalliance;' and at the rate we have hitherto gone on, it must be many thousand years off !

LXXVI. Mankind are an incorrigible race. Give them but bugbears and idols—it is all that they ask; the distinctions of right and wrong, of truth and falsehood, of good and evil, are worse than indifferent to them.

LXXVII. The Devil was a great loss in the preternatural world. He was always something to fear and to hate. He supplied the

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antagonist powers of the imagination, and the arch of true religion hardly stands firm without him. Mr. Irving may perhaps bring him into fashion again.

LXXVIII. Perhaps the evils arising from excessive inequality in a state would be sufficiently obviated if property were divided equally among the surviving children. But it is said it would be impossible to make a law for this purpose, under any circumstances or with any qualifications, because the least interference with the disposal of property would be striking at its existence and at the very root of all property. And yet this objection is urged in those very countries, where the law of primogeniture (intended to keep it in disproportionate masses, and setting aside the will of the testator altogether) is established as an essential part of the law of the land. So blind is reason, where passion or prejudice intervenes !

LXXIX. Kings, who set up for Gods upon earth, should be treated as madmen, which one half of them, or as idiots, which the other half, really are.

LXXX. Tyrants are at all times mad with the lust of power.

LXXXI. Reformers are naturally speculative people ; and speculative people are effeminate and inactive. They brood over ideas, till realities become almost indifferent to them. They talk when they should act, and are distracted with nice doubts and distinctions, while the enemy is thundering at the gates, and the bomb-shells are bursting at their feet. They hold up a paper Constitution as their shield, which the sword pierces through, and drinks their heart's blood ! They are cowards, too, at bottom ; and dare not strike a decisive blow, lest it should be retaliated. While they merely prate of moderation and the public good, they think, if the worst comes to the worst, there may still be a chance of retreat for them, hoping to screen themselves behind their imbecility. They are not like their opponents, whose all is at stake, and who are urged on by instinctive fury and habitual cunning to defend it : the common good is too remote a speculation to call forth any violent passions or personal sacrifices ; and if it should be lost, it is as fine a topic as ever to harangue and lament about. Patriots are, by the constitution of their minds, poets ; and an Elegy on the fall of Liberty is as interesting to hear or to recite as an Ode on its most triumphant success. They who let off Ferdinand the other day, confiding in the promises of a traitor and in the liberality of a despot, were greater hypocrites to themselves than he was.



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LXXXII. In the late quarrel about Liberty, upwards of five millions of men have been killed, and *one king*.

LXXXIII. The people (properly speaking) are not a herd of slaves just let loose, or else goaded on, like blind drudges, to execute the behests of their besotted taskmasters; but the band of free citizens, taught to know their rights, and prepared to exercise them.

LXXXIV. The people are the slaves of ignorance and custom; the friends of the people are the dupes of reason and humanity. Power stops at nothing but its own purposes.

LXXXV. The Author of *Waverley* observes—'In truth, the Scottish peasantry are still infected with that rage for funeral ceremonial, which once distinguished the grandes of the kingdom so much, that a sumptuary law was made by the Parliament of Scotland for the purpose of restraining it; and I have known many in the lowest stations who have denied themselves not merely the comforts, but almost the necessities of life, in order to save such a sum of money as might enable their surviving friends to bury them like Christians, as they termed it; nor could their faithful executors be prevailed upon, though equally necessitous, to turn to the use and maintenance of the living the money vainly wasted upon the interment of the dead.'—'Antiquary,' vol. iv. p. 48. If I were to attempt an explanation of the peculiar delight and pride which the Scotch are thus supposed to take in funeral ceremonies, I should say, that as inhabitants of wild and barren districts, they are more familiar with the face of nature than with the face of man; and easily turn to it as their place of rest and final home. There is little difference, in their imaginations, between treading the green mountain turf, and being laid beneath it. The world itself is but a living tomb to them. Their mode of subsistence is cold, hard, comfortless, bare of luxuries and of enjoyments, torpid, inured to privations and self-denial; and death seems to be its consummation and triumph, rather than its unwelcome end. Their life was a sort of struggle for a dreary existence; so that it relapses into the grave with joy and a feeling of exultation. The grey rock out of which their tomb is cut is a citadel against all assaults of the flesh and the spirit; the kindred earth that wraps the weather-beaten, worn-out body, is a soft and warm resting-place from the hardships it has had to encounter. It is no wonder, therefore, that the Scotch prepare for the due celebration of this event with the foresight characteristic of them, and that their friends consign them to the earth with becoming fortitude and costly ceremony. 'Man,' says Sir Thomas Brown, though in quite a

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different spirit, 'man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes and pompous in the grave; solemnising nativities and deaths with equal lustre, nor omitting ceremonies of bravery, even in the INFAMY of his nature.'—*See his URN BURIAL.*

LXXXVI. In the *Heart of Midlothian* vol. iv. p. 13, we meet with the following reflections: 'Perhaps one ought to be actually a Scotchman to conceive how ardently, under all distinctions of rank and situation, they feel their mutual connection with each other as natives of the same country. There are, I believe, more associations common to the inhabitants of a rude and wild than of a well-cultivated and fertile country: their ancestors have more seldom changed their place of residence; their mutual recollection of remarkable objects is more accurate; the high and the low are more interested in each other's welfare; the feelings of kindred and relationship are more widely extended; and, in a word, the bonds of patriotic affection, always honourable, even when a little too exclusively strained, have more influence on men's feelings and actions.' Thus far our author, but without making much progress in the question he has started. '*Via Goodman Dull!* thou hast spoken no word all this while'—I might say, but I do not choose, to say so, to the Great Unknown. There is an enumeration of particulars, slightly and collaterally connected with the subject, but, as '*Douce David Deans*' would say, 'they do not touch the root of the matter.' In fact, then, the mind more easily forms a strong and abstracted attachment to the soil (in which it was bred) in remote and barren regions, where few artificial objects or pursuits fritter away attention, or divert it from its devotion to the naked charms of nature—(perhaps the privations, dangers, and loneliness incident to such situations also enhance the value and deepen the interest we take in them)—and again, in a rude and scattered population, where there is a dearth and craving after general society, we naturally become more closely and permanently attached to those few persons with whom neighbourhood, or kindred, or a common cause, or similar habits or language, bring us into contact. Two Englishmen meeting in the wilds of Arabia would instantly become friends, though they had never seen one another before, from the want of all other society and sympathy. So it is in the ruder and earlier stages of civilisation. This is what attaches the Highlander to his hill and to his clan. This is what attaches Scotchmen to their country and to one another. A Londoner, in his fondness for London, is distracted between the play-houses, the opera, the shops, the coffee-houses, the crowded streets, &c. An inhabitant of Edinburgh has none of these diversities to reconcile: he has but one

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idea in his head or in his mouth,—that of the Calton Hill; an idea which is easily embraced, and which he never quits his hold of, till something more substantial offers,—a situation as porter in a warehouse, or as pimp to a great man.

### REMARKS ON A PARAGRAPH IN THE *TIMES*, RELATING TO AN ARTICLE IN THE *EDINBURGH REVIEW*.

*The Examiner.*

September 8, 1823.

The paragraph speaks with contemptuous flippancy of the writers in the *Edinburgh Review* as ‘a small fry of critics from either of our Universities.’ That is not true. But one cannot retort the imputation. Nobody knows who the writers in the *Times* are. They affect a mysterious incognito, and have no difficulty in keeping it.

The *Times* Editor puts a serious question to Mr. Jeffrey, ‘How a journal can give a leading tone to the people of England, that is dull, ignorant, and venal?’ He had better ask Dr. Stoddart that question, who once led in the *Times*. Does not Mr. Walter yet know that there is such a thing as leading the public opinion by following it—by taking up a popular and profitable cry, and making more noise about it than anybody else?

In the paragraph in question, he makes a great *fuss* about his independence, and swears before God that he is an honest man. We grant him all that sort of independence, which consists in floating with the tide—but he is not bottomed in any principle, nor remarkable for sailing against the stream. What Mr. Walter should do, is to make an affidavit that he ever advocated any opinion for a day after he thought he should sell a single paper the less for it. ‘*The devil a puritan or anything else but a time-server!*’

That the Mr. Thomas Inkle of modern politics should set up for an enthusiast in patriotism, and boast of his favours to the cause he has betrayed, we own surprises us. Yet he is at present a martyr to ‘the right, because the just course.’ Mr. Walter’s hair stands on end, and he is in a perfect cold-sweat at the sacrifices and dangers he has been exposed to in making head against the abuses of power. He gives one desperate instance. He ventured to condemn ‘the Manchester massacre’—a measure that only one man in the three kingdoms was forward to applaud. Yet with public opinion at his back, with popular clamour, with the indignant scorn of all ‘the honest and independent part of the community’ directed against this illegal, unmanly, and indecent outrage, the Editor of the *Times* looks back with horror to the dangers that beset him, and the gauntlet he ran

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through—'scared at the sound himself had made'—he was surrounded with enemies, he was surrounded with a *cortège* of friends who restrained his natural impetuosity and would not let him rush upon destruction, and after carrying on the contest for a twelvemonth, 'with the approbation of all honest and independent men,' he desisted just at the moment when the profit no longer counterbalanced the trouble and the risk! What we have still to learn is an instance where the *Times* has raised a popular ferment, not where it has joined the cry. That discreet Paper never *bores* the public with any opinion of its own a minute before or after they are ripe for the market, but its talking of public spirit is a jest.

Mr. Walter alludes to the 'infirmities' of Mr. Hazlitt (to whom he gives the credit of the article in the *Edinburgh Review*) with a sort of hysterical affection.—No wonder; he has one which would be his ruin,—that of speaking his mind; and on the score of 'malignity,' we believe he has a pretty rooted hatred and contempt for the destroyers of human Liberty, whose Galvanic attempts at resuscitation, and tampering with the dead body, and seeing what they can get by the skin, are not quite a set-off against the mortal, mercenary blow they aimed at her.

The *Times* Editor speaks of Mr. Hazlitt as a 'discarded servant' of that paper. We beg leave to state distinctly that this is not true. He was *not* dismissed from the *Times* newspaper, *but gave up an engagement in it, in spite of repeated and pressing remonstrances to the contrary*: he *was* dismissed from the *Morning Chronicle* much against his inclination some years before. That then is not the reason why he has praised that paper, and 'bespattered' the *Times*.

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*The Examiner.*

November 18, 1827.

VIVIAN GREY is dedicated to the Best and Greatest of men, as if the Illustrious Person who will take this compliment to himself approved of the sentiments contained in it. Are ushers odious to the Best and Greatest of men? Does he hate the great mass of his subjects, and scorn all those beyond Temple-bar? Is he King only of the Dandies, and Monarch of the West? We scarcely believe it. This volume with its impertinent dedication is no more expressive of the sentiments of his heart than the *Austrian Catechism*, dedicated in like manner, would be characteristic of the principles of his reign. Oh! Mr. Grey, you should have been more humble—you should have inscribed your work to the best-dressed Man in his Majesty's dominions—or to Jack Ketch.

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It was formerly understood to be the business of literature to enlarge the bounds of knowledge and feeling; to direct the mind's eye beyond the present moment and the present object; to plunge us in the world of romance, to connect different languages, manners, times together; to wean us from the grossness of sense, the illusions of self-love;—by the aid of imagination, to place us in the situations of others and enable us to feel an interest in all that strikes them; and to make books the faithful witnesses and interpreters of nature and the human heart. Of late, instead of this liberal and useful tendency, it has taken a narrower and more superficial tone. All that we learn from it is the servility, egotism, and upstart pretensions of the writers. Instead of transporting you to faery-land or into the *middle ages*, you take a turn down Bond Street or go through the mazes of the dance at Almack's. You have no new inlet to thought or feeling opened to you; but the passing object, the topic of the day (however insipid or repulsive) is served up to you with a self-sufficient air, as if you had not already had enough of it. You dip into an Essay or a Novel, and may fancy yourself reading a collection of quack or fashionable advertisements:—Macassar Oil, Eau de Cologne, Hock and Seltzer Water, Otto of Roses, *Pomade Divine* glance through the page in inextricable confusion, and make your head giddy. Far from extending your sympathies, they are narrowed to a single point, the admiration of the folly, caprice, insolence, and affectation of a certain class;—so that with the exception of people who ride in their carriages, you are taught to look down upon the rest of the species with indifference, abhorrence, or contempt. A school-master in a black coat is a monster—a tradesman and his wife who eat cold mutton and pickled cabbage are wretches to be hunted out of society. That is the end and moral of it: it is part and parcel of a system. The *Dandy School* give the finishing touch to the principles of paternal government. First comes the political sycophant, and makes the people over to their rulers as a property in perpetuity; but then they are to be handled tenderly, and need not complain, since the sovereign is the father of his people, and we are to be all one family of love. So says the *Austrian Catechism*. Then comes the literary sycophant to finish what the other had begun; and the poor fools of people having been caught in the trap of plausible professions, he takes off the mask of *paternity*, treats them as of a different species instead of members of the same family, loads them with obloquy and insult, and laughs at the very idea of any fellow feeling with or consideration towards them, as the height of bad taste, weakness, and vulgarity. So say Mr. Theodore Hook and the author of *Vivian Grey*. So says not Sir Walter. Ever while you live, go to a man

## THE DANDY SCHOOL

of genius in preference to a dunce; for let his prejudices or his party be what they may, there is still a saving grace about him, for he himself has something else to trust to besides his subserviency to greatness to raise him from insignificance. He takes you and places you in a cottage or a cavern, and makes you feel the deepest interest in it, for you feel all that its inmates feel. The *Dandy School* tell you all that a dandy would feel in such circumstances, *viz.* that he was not in a drawing-room or at Long's. Or if he does forfeit his character for a moment, he at most brings himself to patronise humanity, condescends to the accidents of common life, touches the pathetic with his pen as if it were with a pair of tongs, and while he just deigns to notice the existence or endure the infirmities of his fellow-creatures, indemnifies his vanity by snatching a conscious glance at his own person and perfections. Whatever is going on, he himself is the hero of the scene; the distress (however excruciating) derives its chief claim to attention from the singular circumstance of his being present; and he manages the whole like a piece of private theatricals with an air of the most absolute *nonchalance* and decorum. The *WHOLE DUTY OF MAN* is turned into a butt and bye-word, or like Mr. Martin's bill for humanity to animals, is a pure voluntary, a caprice of effeminate sensibility: the great business of life is a kind of masquerade or melo-drame got up for effect and by particular desire of the Great. We soon grow tired of nature so treated, and are glad to turn to the follies and fopperies of high life, into which the writer enters with more relish, and where he finds himself more at home. So Mr. Croker (in his place in the House of Commons) does not know where Bloomsbury Square is: thus affecting to level all the houses in the metropolis that are not at the court-end, and leaving them tenantless by a paltry sneer, as if a plague had visited them. It is no wonder that his *protégés* and understrappers out of doors should echo this official impertinence—draw the line still closer between the East and West-end—arrest a stray sentiment at the corner of a street, relegate elegance to a fashionable square—annihilate all other enjoyments, all other pretensions but those of their employers—reduce the bulk of mankind to a cypher, and make all but a few pampered favourites of fortune dissatisfied with themselves and contemptible to one another. The reader's mind is so varnished over with affectation that not an avenue to truth or feeling is left open, and it is stifled for want of breath. Send these people across the Channel who make such a fuss about the East and West-end, and no one can find out the difference.<sup>1</sup> The English are not a nation of *dandies*; nor can John

<sup>1</sup> It is amusing to see an English woman in the streets of Paris looking like a dowdy, and scarcely able to put one foot before another for very awkwardness and

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Bull afford (whatever the panders to fashion and admirers of courtly graces may say to the contrary) to rest all his pretensions upon that. He must descend to a broader and more manly level to keep his ground at all. Those who would persuade him to build up his fame on frogged coats or on the embellishments of a snuff-box, he should scatter with one loud roar of indignation and trample into the earth like grasshoppers, as making not only a beast but an ass of him.

A writer of this accomplished stamp, comes forward to tell you, not how his hero feels on any occasion, for he is above that, but how he was dressed, and makes him a mere lay-figure of fashion with a few pert, current phrases in his mouth. The Sir Sedley Clarendels and Meadowses of a former age are become the real fine gentlemen of this. Then he gives you the address of his heroine's milliner, lest any shocking surmise should arise in your mind of the possibility of her dealing with a person of less approved taste, and also informs you that the quality eat fish with silver forks. This is all he knows about the matter: is this all they feel? The fact is new to him: it is old to them. It is so new to him and he is so delighted with it, that provided a few select persons eat fish with silver forks, he considers it a circumstance of no consequence if a whole country starves: but these privileged persons are not surely thinking all the time and every day of their lives of that which Mr. Theodore Hook has never forgotten since he first witnessed it, *viz.* that *they eat their fish with a silver fork*. What then are they thinking of in their intervals of leisure—what are their feelings that *we* can be supposed to know nothing of? Will Mr. Theodore Hook, who is 'comforted with their bright radiance, though not in their sphere,' condescend to give us a glimpse of these, that we may admire their real elegance and refinement as much as he does a frogged coat or silver fork? It is cruel in him not to do so. 'The *court*, as well as we, may chide him for it.' He once criticised a city feast with great minuteness and bitterness, in which (as it appears) the side-board is ill-arranged, the footman makes a blunder, the cook has sent up a dish too little or too highly seasoned. Something is wanting, as Mr. Hook insinuates is necessarily the case whenever people in the neighbourhood of

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shame, who but a week before she left home had perhaps trampled on a dress brought home to her, in a fit of uncontrollable rage, thrown a cap into the fire, and kicked her milliner down stairs for bringing her such unfashionable trumpery. One would scarcely believe that a mere change of place would make such an alteration in behaviour. When we see our country-women so unpleasantly situated, we are naturally both ashamed and sorry for them: but, as in this case, we pity many of them more than they deserve.

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Russell square give dinners. But that something is not the manners or conversation of gentlemen—this never enters his head—but something that the butler, the cook or the valet of people of fashion could have remedied quite as well (to say the least) as their masters. It is here the cloven-foot, the under-bred tone, the undue admiration of external circumstances breaks out and betrays the writer. Mr. Hook has a fellow-feeling with low life or rather with vulgarity aping gentility, but he has never got beyond the outside of what he calls *good society*. He can lay the cloth or play the buffoon after dinner—but that is the utmost he can pretend to. We have in *Sayings and Doings* and in *Vivian Grey* abundance of Lady Marys and Lady Dorotheys, but they are titles without characters, or the blank is filled up with the most trite impertinence. So a young linen-draper or attorney's-clerk from the country, who had gained a thirty-thousand pound prize in the lottery and wished to set up for a fine gentleman, might learn from these Novels what hotel to put up at, what watering place to go to, what hatter, hosier, tailor, shoemaker, *friseur* to employ, what part of the town he should be seen in, what theatre he might frequent; but how to behave, speak, look, feel and think in his new and more aspiring character he would not find the most distant hint in the gross caricatures or flimsy sketches of the most mechanical and shallow of all schools. It is really as if, in lieu of our royal and fashionable 'Society of Authors,' a deputation of tailors, cooks, lacqueys, had taken possession of Parnassus, and had appointed some Abigail out of place perpetual Secretary. The Congreves, Wycherleys, and Vanbrughs of former days gave us some taste of gentility and courtly refinement in their plays: enchanted us with their Millamants, or made us bow with respect to their Lord Townleys. It would seem that the race of these is over, or that our modern scribes have not had access to them on a proper footing—that is, not for their talents or conversation, but as mountebanks or political drudges.

At first it appears strange that persons of so low a station in life should be seized with such a rage to inveigh against themselves, and make us despise all but a few arrogant people, who pay them ill for what they do. But this is the natural process of servility, and we see all valets and hangers-on of the Great do the same thing. The powdered footman looks down on the rabble that dog his master's coach as beneath his notice. He feels the one little above him, and the other (by consequence) infinitely below him. Authors at present would be thought gentlemen, as gentlemen have a fancy to turn authors. The first thing a *dandy scribbler* does is to let us know he is dressed in the height of the fashion (otherwise we might imagine him some miserable garretteer, distinguished only by his poverty and



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learning)—and the next thing he does is to make a supercilious allusion to some one who is not so well dressed as himself. He then proceeds to give us a sparkling account of his Champagne and of his box at the Opera. A newspaper hack of this description also takes care to inform us that the people at the Opera in general, the Mr. Smiths and the Mr. Browns, are not good enough for him, and that he shall wait to begin his critical lucubrations, till the stars of fashion meet there in crowds and constellations! At present, it should seem that a seat on Parnassus conveys a title to a box at the Opera, and that Helicon no longer runs water but champagne. Literature, so far from supplying us with intellectual resources to counterbalance immediate privations, is made an instrument to add to our impatience and irritability under them, and to nourish our feverish, childish admiration of external show and grandeur. This rage for fashion and for fashionable writing seems becoming universal, and some stop must be put to it, unless it cures itself by its own excessive folly and insipidity.

It is well that the Editor of the *John Bull* wrote the *Sayings and Doings*. It solves the problem with how small a quantity of wit a person without character or principle may set up for a political mouthpiece. Nothing but the dullness of the one could account for the impudence and the effect of the other. No one who could write a line of wit or sense could bring himself from any inducement to repeat the same nickname, the same stale jest, for weeks and months together. If the Editor of the *John Bull* had any resources in himself beyond the most vulgar *slang* and hackneyed abuse, if he had any sense of shame at resorting to the same wretched pun or more wretched calumny, week after week, as he is paid for it, he would be unfit for his task: he would no longer be the complete and unequivocal organ of the dulness, prejudices, malice, and callous insensibility of his party. No argument tells with a minister of State like calling a man a Jacobin and a Reformer for the fortieth time: the sleek Divine chuckles at a dirty allusion for the fortieth time with unabated glee. Mr. Hook, among wits, might be called *the parson's nose*: or perhaps the title of Mr. Vivacity Dull would suit him as well. What a dearth of invention, what a want of interest, what a fuss about nothing, what a dreary monotony, what a pert *slipslop* jargon runs through the whole series of the author's tales! But what a persevering, unabashed confidence, what a broad-shouldered self-complacency, what robust health, what unrelenting nerves he must possess to inflict them on his readers! Not one ray, not one line—but all the refuse of the *Green-room*, the locomotions of a booth at a fair, the humours of a Margate hoy, the grimace of a jack-pudding, the sentimentalities and

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hashed-up scandal of a lady's maid, the noise and hurry of a chaise and four, the *ennui* and vacancy of a return post-chaise! The smart *improvisatori* turns out the most wearisome of interminable writers. At a moment's warning he can supply something that is worth nothing, and in ten times the space he can spin out ten times the quantity of the same poor trash. Would the public read *Sayings and Doings*? Would Mr. Colburn print them? No, but they are known to be the work of the Editor of the *John Bull*, of that great and anonymous abstract of wit, taste, and patriotism, who, like a Ministerial trull, calls after you in the street, dubs Mr. Waithman Lord Waithman, cries *Humbug* whenever humanity is mentioned; invades the peace of private life, out of regard to religion and social order; cuts a throat out of good nature, and laughs at it; and claps his Majesty familiarly on the shoulder, as the best of Kings! Do you wonder at the face, the gravity, the impenetrable assurance required to do all this, and to do it not once, but once a-week? Read *Sayings and Doings*, and the wonder ceases; you see it is because he can do nothing else! He will feel obliged to us for this character: his patrons were beginning to forget his qualifications.

## QUERIES AND ANSWERS; OR THE RULE OF CONTRARY

*The London Weekly Review.*

November 17, 1827.

1. WHY is the word *comfort* so continually in the mouths of the English?—Because the English are the most uncomfortable of all people: for being so liable to receive pain from outward objects, and being made uneasy by everything that is not as they wish it, they are obliged to remove, if possible, every source of annoyance, and have *all their comforts about them*.

2. Why are the English so fond of clubs, corporate bodies, joint-stock companies, and large associations of all kinds?—Because they are the most unsociable set of people in the world: for being mostly at variance with each other, they are glad to get any one else to join and be on their side; having no spontaneous attraction, they are forced to fasten themselves into the machine of society; and each holds out in his individual shyness and reserve, till he is carried away by the crowd, and borne with a violent, but welcome shock against some other mass of aggregate prejudice or self-interest. The English join together to get rid of their sharp points and sense of uncomfortable peculiarity. Hence, their clubs, their mobs, their sects, their parties, their spirit of co-operation, and previous understanding in every thing. An English mob is a collection of violent and head-

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strong humours, acting with double force from each man's natural self-will, and the sense of opposition to others; and the same may be said of the nation at large. The French unite and separate more easily; and therefore do not collect into such formidable masses, and act with such unity and tenacity of purpose. It is the same with their ideas, which easily join together, and easily part company, but do not form large or striking masses: and hence, the French are full of wit and fancy, but without imagination and principle. The French are governed by fashion, the English by cabal.

3. Why are the English a credulous nation, and the eager dupes of all sorts of quacks and impostors?—Because they are a dry, plodding, *matter-of-fact* people, and having, in general, no idea of the possibility of telling lies, think all they hear or read must be true, and are left at the mercy of every empiric or knavish pretender, who will take the trouble to impose on them. From their very gravity and seriousness, they are the dupes of superficial professions and appearances, which they think (judging from themselves), must imply all they pretend. Their folly and love of the marvellous takes a practical and mischievous turn; they despise the fictitious, and require to be amused by something that they think solid and useful. Hence, they swallow Dr. Brodum's pills, Joanna Southcote's prophecies, the Literary Gazette, and Blackwood's Magazine, taking them all for gospel. They constantly have a succession of idols or bug-bears. There is always some one to be hunted down at the time for their amusement, like a strange dog in a village; and some name, some work that is cried up for half-a-dozen years, as containing all wisdom, and then you hear no more of it. No people judge so much as the English at second-hand, except in mere matters of pounds, shillings, and pence; and even then they may be gulled by impudence and quackery. Every thing is either in collusion or collision. *Thimble* was a great man in the O. P. Row, and now regulates the debates in Parliament. If a man has a monstrous good opinion of himself, and nothing will drive him out of it, the English will come into his way of thinking, sooner than be left in a *minority*, or not appear to be in the secret! Lest they should seem stupid, they try to be *knowing*, as they become forward in aiming to be witty, and vulgar in affecting to be genteel.

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*The London Weekly Review.*

December 29, 1827.

'BOTTOM, thou art translated!' might serve as the motto of many a hero of the shuttle, besides him of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. This class of *virtuosi* seem to have always had the instinct of aspiring,

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and with a similar fatality attending it. Why does Mr. Peel come forward as candidate for the Presidency of the Royal Society?—Because he has not learning or qualifications sufficient to entitle him to be chosen a Member of that profound body; but by modestly overstepping the inferior degrees, he makes it appear as if it was the only question, whether he has not a right to the highest place. The superiority which is confidently assumed, is even better than that which is proved, for it amounts to a self-evident proposition. So a fellow who cannot write gets to be editor of three Reviews and two Magazines, to show that he is like Lingo—‘a master of scholars’;—or, having been put back at College for not understanding the questions put to him at his examination, comes to town, and pronounces, with an air betwixt a dandy and a dunce, *de omni intelligibili*. A man puzzled in his choice between two beautiful mistresses, has been known to marry an ugly one to relieve himself from the dilemma; and on the same principle Mr. Peel may succeed, for in the difficulty of determining between equal pretensions, the want of them is a distinction: and besides, it is easier to reckon up a man’s wealth and connexions than to estimate his genius or acquirements. The sublunary resembles the celestial sphere: the great men we see make so prominent a figure in it are, like the signs of the zodiac, mere fanciful forms, or the drapery of circumstances, drawn round the most insignificant points. In the formation of the last administration, some names were talked of for the first offices, that had never before been heard of: at least, no one could find fault with the choice, for nobody knew anything about them—*omne ignotum pro magnifico est*—and it looked as if there must be weighty motives indeed for a preference, which had none of the obvious grounds of public services or popular celebrity to recommend it. Probably these gentlemen were allied to the State by marriage—*ter felices quos irrupta tenet copula!* The world has its reasons, too, though not those it professes; and makes up its grandest heraldry of false pretences. Like the tempter who poured his instructions into the ear of our first parents, it was ‘a liar from the beginning’; and woe to those who laugh in the face of the grave imposture! Mr. Haydon wonders he is not elected a Member of the Royal Academy, as if his talents did not entitle him—as if they chose people merely for their talents as artists. *This would indeed be bringing coals to Newcastle.* No, Sir, a Royal Academician is *another guess* sort of a character from a mere artist. Sir, a Royal Academician has the King’s diploma to write himself *Armiger* in any bond, quittance, or warrant: it made D—w a gentleman—it was not that which made N—rthc—te one. What, do you still praise that little old withered wasp? Yes: spleen before everything but truth; but truth before everything!

## BRUMMELLIANA

### BRUMMELLIANA

*The London Weekly Review.*

February 2, 1828.

WE look upon Beau Brummell as the greatest of small wits. Indeed, he may in this respect be considered, as Cowley says of Pindar, as 'a species alone,' and as forming a class by himself. He has arrived at the very *minimum* of wit, and reduced it, 'by happiness or pains,' to an almost invisible point. All his *bons-mots* turn upon a single circumstance, the exaggerating of the merest trifles into matters of importance, or treating everything else with the utmost *nonchalance* and indifference, as if whatever pretended to pass beyond those limits was a *bore*, and disturbed the serene air of high life. We have heard of

'A sound so fine,  
That nothing lived 'twixt it and silence.'

So we may say of Mr. Brummell's jests, that they are of a meaning so attenuated that 'nothing lives 'twixt them and nonsense':—they hover on the very brink of vacancy, and are in their shadowy composition next of kin to nonentities. It is impossible for anyone to go beyond him without falling flat into insignificance and insipidity: he has touched the *ne plus ultra* that divides the dandy from the dunce. But what a fine eye to discriminate: what a sure hand to hit this last and thinnest of all intellectual partitions! *Exempli gratiâ*—for in so new a species, the theory is unintelligible without furnishing the proofs:—

Thus, in the question addressed to a noble person (which we quoted the other day), 'Do you call that *thing* a coat?' a distinction is taken as nice as it is startling. It seems all at once a vulgar prejudice to suppose that a coat is a coat, the commonest of all common things,—it is here lifted into an ineffable essence, so that a coat is no longer a *thing*; or that it would take infinite gradations of fashion, taste, and refinement, for a *thing* to aspire to the undefined privileges, and mysterious attributes of a coat. Finer 'fooling' than this cannot be imagined. What a cut upon the Duke! The beau becomes an emperor among such insects!

The first anecdote in which Mr. Brummell's wit dawned upon us—and it really rises with almost every new instance—was the following: A friend one day called upon him, and found him confined to his room from a lameness in one foot, upon which he expressed his concern at the accident. 'I am sorry for it too,' answered Brummell very gravely, 'particularly as it's *my favourite leg*!' Is not this as if a man of fashion had nothing else to do than to sit and think of which of his legs he liked best; and in the plenitude of his satisfactions, and the absence of all real wants, to ponder this fanciful dis-

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inction into a serious sort of *pet* preference? Upon the whole, among so many beauties—*ubi tot nitent*, I am inclined to give my suffrage in favour of this, as the most classical of all our contemporary's *jeux d'esprit*—there is an Horatian ease and elegance about it—a slippered negligence, a cushioned effeminacy—it would take years of careless study and languid enjoyment to strike out so quaint and ingenious a conceit—

'A subtler web Arachne cannot spin;  
Nor the fine nets which oft we woven see  
Of scorched dew, do not in the air more lightly flee!'

It is truly the art of making something out of nothing.

We shall not go deeply into the common story of Mr. Brummell's asking his servant, as he was going out for the evening, 'Where do I dine to-day, John?' This is little more than the common cant of a multiplicity of engagements, so as to make it impossible to bear them all in mind, and of an utter disinclination to all attention to one's own affairs; but the following is brilliant and original. Sitting one day at table between two other persons, Mr. Brummell said to his servant, who stood behind his chair—'John!' 'Yes, sir.' 'Who is this at my right hand?' 'If you please, sir, it's the Marquis of Headfort.' 'And who is this at my left hand?' 'It's my Lord Yarmouth.' 'Oh, very well!' and the Beau then proceeded to address himself to the persons who were thus announced to him. Now, this is surely superb, and 'high fantastical.' No, the smallest fold of that nicely adjusted cravat was not to be deranged, the least deviation from that select posture was not to be supposed possible. Had his head been fastened in a vice, it could not have been more immovably fixed than by the 'great idea in his mind,' of how a coxcomb should sit: the air of fashion and affectation 'bound him with Styx nine times round him'; and the Beau preserved the perfection of an attitude—like a piece of incomprehensible *still-life*,—the whole of dinner-time. The *ideal* is everything, even in frivolity and folly.

It is not one of the least characteristic of our hero's answers to a lady, who asked him if he never tasted vegetables—'Madam, I once ate a pea!' This was reducing the quantity of offensive grossness to the smallest assignable fraction: anything beyond *that* his imagination was oppressed with; and even this he seemed to confess to, with a kind of remorse, and to hasten from the subject with a certain monosyllabic brevity of style.

I do not like the mere impudence (Mr. Theodore Hook, with his extempore dullness, might do the same thing) of forcing himself into a lady's rout, who had not invited him to her parties, and the gabble

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about Hopkinses and Tomkinses; but there is something piquant enough in his answer to a city-fashionable, who asked him if he would dine with him on a certain day—‘Yes, if you won’t mention it to anyone’; and in an altercation with the same person afterwards, about obligations, the assumption of superiority implied in the appeal—‘Do you count my having *borrowed* a thousand pounds of you for nothing?’ soars immediately above commonplace.

On one occasion, Mr. Brummell falling ill, accounted for it by saying, ‘They put me to bed to a damp ——!’ From what slight causes direst issues spring! So sensitive and apprehensive a constitution makes one sympathise with its delicate possessor, as much as if he had been shut up in the steam of a laundry, or ‘his lodging had been on the cold ground.’ Mr. Brummell having been interrogated as to the choice of his present place of residence (Calais) as somewhat dull replied, ‘He thought it hard if a gentleman could not pass his time agreeably between London and Paris.’

Some of Brummell’s *bons-mots* have been attributed to Sir Lumley Skeffington, who is even said to have been the first in this minute and tender walk of wit. It is, for instance, reported of him that, being at table and talking of daisies, he should turn round to his valet, and say with sentimental *naïveté* and trivial fondness—‘On what day of the month did I first see a daisy, Matthew?’ ‘On the 1st of February, sir.’ There is here a kindred vein; but whoever was the inventor, Brummell has borne away the prize, as Pope eclipsed his master Dryden, and Titian surpassed Giorgione’s fame. In fine, it was said, with equal truth and spirit by one of the parties concerned, that ‘the year 1815 was fatal to three great men—Byron, Buonaparte, and Brummell!’

## CIVILIZATION OF AFRICA.

*The London Weekly Review.*

March 15, 1828.

Several learned men in France are amusing themselves and the public with plans for the civilization of Africa. M. Drovetti proposes to send a number of African youths, purchased in Egypt, to be educated at Paris; and when these young Lycurguses shall have imbibed a sufficient tinge of French learning and manners, they are to be sent back to give laws to the cannibals of Guinea, and other perfectible districts. We advise him to change his plan altogether, and instead of young men, to fix upon a number of pretty negresses to send to Paris. This would be the way to civilize Africa. The young ladies, accomplished in the sublime arts of waltzing, coquetry, and music,

## BYRON AND WORDSWORTH

and dressed in the last new fashion of Paris, would quickly subdue the black savages of the wilderness, and send civilization blazing like a comet through the heart of Africa. They will never persuade us that learning can civilize mankind. It is love that must do it. Civilize, therefore, the objects of love; teach them to manage the artillery of the eyes, to smile, to sigh, to refuse and yield in a civilized way, and you gain your point. A thousand women would set all Africa reading the Bible, and studying Newton in ten years. Male savages, teach them what you will, always relapse into barbarism, when they return to their homes, merely to oblige their wild beauties; but no one ever heard of a woman that had been civilized, that is, that had been taught the value of dress and ornament, and the refined homage of man, ever again becoming a savage. Women are the best legislators. Our sex, stupidly attached to the signs of power, rather than to power itself, offend and disgust the barbarians they would civilize by displaying their superiority; but woman knows better. She pretends to no power, and would be offended at being supposed to possess it; but in her humility and self-denial she possesses the art to subdue the fury of the most fierce, and to smile him into humanity. Therefore, Messrs. Chauvet and Pacho and Drovetti, if you really wish to see Rousseau and Montaigne read on the banks of the Niger, import a little army of young negresses, and send them back with a taste for what you regard as civilization.

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*The London Weekly Review.*

*April 5, 1828.*

I AM much surprised at Lord Byron's haste to return a volume of Spenser, which was lent him by Mr. Hunt, and at his apparent indifference to the progress and (if he pleased) *advancement* of poetry up to the present day. Did he really think that all genius was concentrated in his own time, or in his own bosom? With his pride of ancestry, had he no curiosity to explore the heraldry of intellect? or did he regard the Muse as an upstart—a mere modern *blue-stocking* and fine lady? I am afraid that high birth and station, instead of being (as Mr. Burke predicates), 'a cure for a narrow and selfish mind,' only make a man more full of himself, and, instead of enlarging and refining his views, impatient of any but the most inordinate and immediate stimulus. I do not recollect, in all Lord Byron's writings, a single recurrence to a feeling or object that had ever excited an interest before; there is no display of natural affection—no twining of the heart round any object: all is the restless and



## BYRON AND WORDSWORTH

disjointed effect of first impressions, of novelty, contrast, surprise, grotesque costume, or sullen grandeur. *His* beauties are the *bouris* of Paradise, the favourites of a seraglio, the changing visions of a feverish dream. His poetry, it is true, is stately and dazzling, arched like a rainbow, of bright and lovely hues, painted on the cloud of his own gloomy temper—perhaps to disappear as soon! It is easy to account for the antipathy between him and Mr. Wordsworth. Mr. Wordsworth's poetical mistress is a Pamela; Lord Byron's an Eastern princess or a Moorish maid. It is the extrinsic, the uncommon that captivates him, and all the rest he holds in sovereign contempt. This is the obvious result of pampered luxury and high-born sentiments. The mind, like the palace in which it has been brought up, admits none but new and costly furniture. From a scorn of homely simplicity, and a surfeit of the artificial, it has but one resource left in exotic manners and preternatural effect. So we see in novels, written by ladies of quality, all the marvellous allurements of a fairy tale, jewels, quarries of diamonds, giants, magicians, condors and ogres.<sup>1</sup> The author of the Lyrical Ballads describes the lichen on the rock, the withered fern, with some peculiar feeling that he has about them: the author of Childe Harold describes the stately cypress, or the fallen column, with the feeling that every schoolboy has about them. The world is a grown schoolboy, and relishes the latter most. When Rousseau called out—'*Ab! voila de la pervenche!*' in a transport of joy at sight of the periwinkle, because he had first seen this little blue flower in company with Madame Warens thirty years before, I cannot help thinking, that any astonishment expressed at the sight of a palm-tree, or even of Pompey's Pillar, is vulgar compared to this! Lord Byron, when he does not saunter down Bond-street, goes into the East: when he is not occupied with the passing topic, he goes back two thousand years, at one poetic, gigantic stride! But instead of the sweeping mutations of empire, and the vast lapses of duration, shrunk up into an antithesis, commend me to the 'slow and creeping foot of time,' in the commencement of Ivanhoe, where the jester and the swine-herd watch the sun going down behind the low-stunted trees of the forest, and their loitering and impatience make the summer's day seem so long, that we wonder how we have ever got to the end of the six hundred years that have passed since! That where the face of nature has changed, time should have rolled on its course, is but a common-place discovery; but that where all seems the same (the long rank grass, and the stunted oaks, and the

<sup>1</sup> See Ada Reis.

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innocent pastoral landscape), all should have changed—this is to me the burthen and the mystery. The ruined pile is a memento and a monument to him that reared it—oblivion has here done but half its work; but what yearnings, what vain conflicts with its fate come over the soul in the other case, which makes man seem like a grasshopper—an insect of the hour, and all that he is, or that others have been—nothing!

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*The London Weekly Review.*

May 17, 1828.

H. I THINK, as Sir Philip Sidney says that Shakespeare or Chaucer (I forget which) 'did well in *Troilus and Cressida*,' that Leigh Hunt has done well in the *Sea Voyage*. His ship (and that's a bold word) is as fine as Lord Byron's boat in *Don Juan*; nay, for aught I know, finer—truer, and less horrible. I do not believe, for instance, that that splendid description of the rainbow in the latter, with the arch of deeper blue beneath, is anything but an imposing assumption; for this reason, that there is no blue in the case, the rainbow being painted on a cloud. Ask Mr. Martin, the painter, about it. He can tell whether, with the most daring license of his pencil, he would venture to make the sky under a rainbow of a deep indigo colour. *Purple*, perhaps, he might:—*poetice*, a deep blue! Mr. Hunt has exaggerated—has transposed nothing: he has merely described what he saw and felt, with vividness and a touching pathos. It is, I might say, almost the first time he has given himself fair play, or done himself common justice. And the reason is obvious; he is here thrown out (in spite of himself) into the wide world of waters, and left to his better genius: he is at buffets with the ocean, looks the Atlantic in the face, or glides over the Mediterranean seas, leaving Hampstead and Highgate far behind. He is torn, sorely against his will, from his old habits and associations, cuts the cable of *cockneyism* quite, slips out of the swathing-bands that 'bound him with *friends* nine times round him,' and launches for the first time into scenes worthy of himself, and 'looks abroad into universality,' with the wonder of the boy, and the thoughtfulness of a man. He takes a new pallet to describe his sensations, employs none but *virgin* tints—glossy, pure, profound. Even the little family anecdotes add to the general grandeur and interest. Of a man in Mr. Hunt's situation, it may be justly said, that

'*Bairns and wife*  
Are the true pathos and sublime  
Of human life.'

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It is egotism, if you talk of them, because they are yours ; but when an uncertain plank is only between them and death, they are not yours only, they belong to everyone who has a heart. Methinks, the wife and children of a Mohawk Reviewer, if they were drowning, would no longer be the wife and children of a Mohawk Reviewer. They would be abstracted by the force of terror and pity from the sphere of party-spirit. But ' Mrs. Hunt and her bold brats '—oh ! that's a different case, Mr. Lecturer on Moral Philosophy, or author of Chaldee Manuscripts, whichever title pleases you best ! The Paria and the Nayr, I understand you—*passé pour cela*. What a fine use Hunt has made of the poor goat shivering in the wet and cold.

S. But don't you think the mention of these things mean and petty ?

H. What do you think of Lord Byron's handkerchief hung up to catch the drops of rain that fell ? Does not the meanness of the means add to the grandeur of the effect, and set off the surrounding circumstances by contrast ?

S. But, after all, I cannot think Mr. Hunt's prose description equal to Lord Byron's verse ; and you remember it is his best.

H. It may be so ; but we will try a passage out of the other, if you will hear it. There is nothing said about it in the Reviews : so you may judge for yourself. ' From previous illness and constant excitation my fancy was sickened into a kind of hypochondriachal investment and shaping of things about me. A little more, and I might have imagined the fantastic shapes which the sea is constantly interweaving out of the foam at the vessel's side, to be sea-snakes or more frightful hieroglyphics. The white clothes that hung up on pegs in the cabin, took, in the gloomy light from above, an aspect of things of meaning ; and the winds and rain together, as they ran blind and howling along by the vessel's side, when I was on deck, appeared like frantic spirits of the air, chasing and shrieking after one another, and tearing each other by the hair of their heads. " The grandeur of the glooms " on the Atlantic was majestic indeed : the healthiest eye would have seen them with awe. The sun rose in the morning, at once fiery and sicklied over ; a livid gleam played on the water, like the reflection of lead ; then the storms would recommence ; and, during partial clearings off, the clouds and fogs appeared standing in the sky, moulded into gigantic shapes, like antediluvian wonders, or visitants from the zodiac,—mammoth, vaster than have yet been thought of ; the first ungainly and stupendous ideas of bodies and legs, looking out on an unfinished world. These fancies were ennobling from their magnitude. The pain that was mixed with some of the others I might have displaced by a fillip of the blood.'—Now this is not fresh-water description—cock-boat sailing.

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S. I do not think you can vindicate some of the expressions from the charge of *cockneyism* : some of the images remind me of Keats.

H. Pray, did it never strike you that Lord Byron himself was a *cockney-writer*, if descending from the conventional to the vernacular is to be so ? Can you tell me if the phrase ‘grandeur of the glooms,’ quoted above, is Keats’s or Lord Byron’s : if it belong to the one, you will allow it is damnable ; if to the other, highly commendable ?

S. Do you not sometimes, before pronouncing your opinion of a print, glance your eye down to the *pinxit* in one corner ?

H. Never. But perhaps you do not know that I was at one time charged by the sages of Mr. Blackwood, with being the writer of the *Island* : and that Mr. John Hunt brought his action against the Magazine, for being there called a ‘liar, an impostor, and a swindler,’ for publishing it in Lord Byron’s name ?

S. How did it fall to the ground ? I never heard of it.

H. Because Lord Byron’s letters were not sufficient legal evidence ; and it would have been necessary for him to come over in person, to prove that he wrote his own poem. Mr. Jerdan echoed the assertion with all his might (*Hic niger est, hunc tu, Romane, caveto*) ; and to this hour hardly knows what to make of it.

S. Must he not know——

H. Do you suppose that he knows anything ; or that when the world believes the lies these fellows tell, they do not half believe them themselves ? Belief is with them mechanical, voluntary : they believe what they are paid for—they swear to that which turns to account. Do you suppose, that after years spent in this manner, they have any feeling left answering to the difference between truth and falsehood ? But why should we ever think of Mr. Jerdan and his artificer’s face, when one can turn to a page bright and breathing like the following ?—

‘What a crowd of thoughts face one on entering the Mediterranean ! Grand as the sensation is, in passing through the classical and romantic memories of the sea off the Western coast of the Peninsula, it is little compared with this. Countless generations of the human race, from three quarters of the world, with all the religions and the mythologies, and the genius, and the wonderful deeds, good and bad, that have occupied almost the whole attention of mankind, look you in the face from the galleries of that ocean-floor, rising one above another till the tops are lost in heaven. The water at your feet is the same water that bathes the shores of Europe, of Africa, and of Asia—of Italy, and Greece, and the Holy Land, and the lands of chivalry and romance, and pastoral Sicily, and the Pyramids, and old Crete, and the Arabian city of Al Cairo, glittering in the magic lustre of the Thousand and One Nights. This soft air in your face comes from the grove of

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‘Daphne by Orontes,” these lucid waters, that part before you like oil, are the same from which Venus rose, pressing them out of her hair. In that quarter Vulcan fell—

“ Dropt from the zenith like a falling star ” :

and there is Circe’s Island and Calypso’s, and the promontory of Plato, and Ulysses wandering, and Cymon and Miltiades fighting, and Regulus crossing the sea to Carthage, and

“ Damasco, and Morocco, and Trebisond :  
And whom Biserta sent from Afric shore,  
When Charlemagne with all his peerage fell.  
By Fontarabia.”

The mind hardly separates truth from fiction in thinking of all these things, nor does it wish to do so. Fiction is truth in another shape, and gives as close embraces. You may shut a door upon a ruby, and render it of no colour : but the colour shall not be the less enchanting for that, when the sun, the poet of the world, touches it with his golden pen. What we glow at, and shed tears over, is as real as love and pity.’

S. It seems then your friend Mr. Hunt, and Mr. Jerdan, who is no favourite of yours, jump in the same conclusion of the little difference between truth and falsehood—

‘ And thin partitions do their bounds divide.’

H. They do, but by a different road. The extremes of beauty and deformity meet.

S. I am not surprised at your admiring this style : it is like your own and Landor’s.

H. Not so. Landor would have buried the same thought under a load of learning, and I of metaphysical rubbish. It is here bright and quick as the first feeling of truth, or ‘ light as the foam, just severed from the parted wave ’ ; or I will tell you what the style resembles, the slender Italian characters written by a beauty in glass, with the brilliant’s point.

S. Nay, now you are growing ridiculous.

H. If they had been written by a person of quality, would not the Reviewers have lifted up their hands at the ease and elegance, to which high birth alone can raise the style and fancy ? But here is another, which I even prefer to the last.—‘ Here Orlando played the tricks that got him the title of Furioso ; and from the port of Barcelona, Angelica and Medoro took ship for her dominion of Cathay. I confess I looked at these shores with a human interest—I could not help fancying that

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the keel of our vessel was crossing a real line, over which knights and lovers had passed. And so they have, both real and fabulous; the former not less romantic, the latter scarcely less real; to thousands, indeed, much more so; for who knows of hundreds of real men and women, that have crossed these waters, and suffered actual passion on those shores and hills? And who knows not Orlando, and all the hard blows he gave, and the harder blow than all, given him by two happy lovers; and the lovers themselves, the representatives of all the young love that ever was? I had a grudge of my own against Angelica, looking upon myself as jilted by those fine eyes which the painter has given her in the English picture; for I took her for a more sentimental person: but I excused her, seeing her beset and tormented by all those very meritorious knights, who thought they earned a right to her by hacking and hewing; and I more than pardoned her when I found that Medoro, besides being young and handsome, was a friend and a devoted follower. But what of that? They were both young and handsome; and love, at that time of life, goes upon no other merits—taking all the rest upon trust in the generosity of its wealth, and as willing to bestow a throne as a ribbon, to show the all-sufficiency of its contentment. Fair speed your sails over the lucid waters, ye lovers, on a lover-like sea!—Fair speed them, yet never land; for where the poet has left you, there ought ye, as ye are, to be living for ever—for ever gliding about a summer sea, touching at its flowery islands, and reposing beneath its moon.’—I confess I am pleased whenever Mr. Hunt mentions Ariosto, for there is something congenial in their spirits, and even a likeness in their heads, if the portrait by Titian, in one of the palaces at Venice, speaks true. Ask Mr. Moore, for he has seen it.

S. You are right to speak well of Hunt’s book; you make a better figure in it than you generally do.

H. I am proud of the honesty and courage he has shown in that respect; but he does not go out of his way to oblige me, I assure you. For instance, he does not mention that it was I who introduced him to Landor at Florence, which would have given me great satisfaction, though in the same passage there is sedulous mention of two other friends of his, as personally agreeable to him. I had said of one of these, that I did not like his face. Hunt, looking dryly, and with a half smile, said he thought he could tell me something of his friend K——, that might make me think better of him. I kept my countenance, expecting a compliment to myself, for I know nothing that can make you think better of another, but that he thinks well of you. After a pause, Leigh Hunt added, ‘Mr. K—— offered to lend me some money just before I left Florence.’ The effect and disappointment was odd.

## SELF-LOVE AND BENEVOLENCE

I told someone it put me in mind of the story I had heard of George Dyer, who, helping a friend on with his great-coat, the gentleman put one arm in himself, and, waiting for Dyer to assist him to the other, at length turned round and found that he had put his own arm into the other sleeve.

S. And pray, sir, who is Mr. Dyer? I never heard of him before, as I have been long absent from the country.

H. Mr. Dyer, sir, has been more than that—he has been absent from himself. Did you never hear of the trick he played Lamb about his farce?

S. No.

H. I will tell you it in my next.

## SELF-LOVE AND BENEVOLENCE

*The New Monthly Magazine.*

October, 1828.

A. For my part, I think Helvetius has made it clear that self-love is at the bottom of all our actions, even of those which are apparently the most generous and disinterested.

H. I do not know what you mean by saying that Helvetius has made this clear, nor what you mean by self-love.

A. Why, was not he the first who explained to the world that in gratifying others, we gratify ourselves; that though the result may be different, the motive is really the same, and a selfish one; and that if we had not more pleasure in performing what are called friendly or virtuous actions than the contrary, they would never enter our thoughts?

H. Certainly he is no more entitled to this discovery (if it be one) than you are. Hobbes and Mandeville long before him asserted the same thing in the most explicit and unequivocal manner;<sup>1</sup> and Butler, in the Notes and Preface to his Sermons, had also long before answered it in the most satisfactory way.

A. Ay, indeed! pray how so?

H. By giving the *common-sense* answer to the question which I have just asked of you.

A. And what is that? I do not exactly comprehend.

<sup>1</sup> 'Il a manqué au plus grand philosophe qu'aient eu les Français, de vivre dans quelque solitude des Alpes, dans quelque séjour éloigné, et de lancer delà son livre dans Paris sans y venir jamais lui-même. Rousseau avait trop de sensibilité et trop peu de raison, Buffon trop d'hypocrisie à son jardin des plantes, Voltaire trop d'enfantillage dans la tête, pour pouvoir juger le principe d'Helvétius.'—*De l'Amour*, tom. 2. p. 230.

My friend Mr. Beyle here lays too much stress on a borrowed verbal fallacy.

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H. Why, that self-love means, both in common and philosophical speech, the love of self.

A. To be sure, *there needs no ghost to tell us that.*

H. And yet, simple as it is, both you and many great philosophers seem to have overlooked it.

A. You are pleased to be obscure—unriddle for the sake of the vulgar.

H. Well then, Bishop Butler's statement in the volume I have mentioned—

A. May I ask, is it the author of the *Analogy* you speak of?

H. The same, but an entirely different and much more valuable work. His position is, that the arguments of the opposite party go to prove that in all our motives and actions it is the individual indeed who loves or is interested in *something*, but not in the smallest degree (which yet seems necessary to make out the full import of the compound 'sound significant,' *self-love*) that that something is *himself*. By self-love is surely implied not only that it is I who feel a certain passion, desire, good-will, and so forth, but that I feel this good-will towards myself—in other words, that I am both the person feeling the attachment, and the object of it. In short, the controversy between self-love and benevolence relates not to the person who loves, but to the person beloved—otherwise, it is flat and puerile nonsense. There must always be some one to feel the love, that's certain, or else there could be no love of one thing or another—so far there can be no question that it is a given individual who feels, thinks, and acts in all possible cases of feeling, thinking, and acting—'there needs,' according to your own allusion, 'no ghost come from the grave to tell us that'—but whether the said individual in so doing always thinks *of*, feels *for*, and acts *with a view to himself*, that is a very important question, and the only real one at issue; and the very statement of which, in a distinct and intelligible form, gives at once the proper and inevitable answer to it. Self-love, to mean any thing, must have a double meaning, that is, must not merely signify love, but love defined and directed in a particular manner, having *self* for its object, reflecting and reacting upon *self*; but it is downright and intolerable trifling to persist that the love or concern which we feel for another still has *self* for its object, because it is we who feel it. The same sort of quibbling would lead to the conclusion that when I am thinking of any other person, I am notwithstanding thinking of myself, because it is *I* who have his image in my mind.

A. I cannot, I confess, see the connection.

H. I wish you would point out the distinction. Or let me ask



## SELF-LOVE AND BENEVOLENCE

you—Suppose you were to observe me looking frequently and earnestly at myself in the glass, would you not be inclined to laugh, and say that this was vanity?

*A.* I might be half-tempted to do so.

*H.* Well; and if you were to find me admiring a fine picture, or speaking in terms of high praise of the person or qualities of another, would you not set it down equally to an excess of coxcombrty and self-conceit?

*A.* How, in the name of common sense, should I do so?

*H.* Nay, how should you do otherwise upon your own principles? For if sympathy with another is to be construed into self-love because it is I who feel it, surely, by the same rule, my admiration and praise of another must be resolved into self-praise and self-admiration, and I am the whole time delighted with myself, to wit, with my own thoughts and feelings, while I pretend to be delighted with another. Another's limbs are as much mine, who contemplate them, as his feelings.

*A.* Now, my good friend, you go too far: I can't think you serious.

*H.* Do I not tell you that I have a most grave Bishop (equal to a whole Bench) on my side?

*A.* What! is this illustration of the looking-glass and picture his? I thought it was in your own far-fetched manner.

*H.* And why far-fetched?

*A.* Because nobody can think of calling the praise of another self-conceit—the words have a different meaning in the language.

*H.* Nobody has thought of confounding them hitherto, and yet they sound to me as like as selfishness and generosity. If our vanity can be brought to admire others disinterestedly, I do not see but our good-nature may be taught to serve them as disinterestedly. Grant me but this, that self-love signifies not simply, 'I love,' but requires to have this further addition, 'I love *myself*,' understood in order to make sense or grammar of it, and I defy you to make one or the other of Helvetius's theory, if you will needs have it to be his. If, as Fielding says, all our passions are selfish merely because they are *ours*, then in hating another we must be said to hate ourselves, just as wisely as in loving another, we are said to be actuated by self-love. I have no patience with such foolery. I respect that fine old sturdy fellow Hobbes, or even the acute pertinacious sophistry of Mandeville; but I do not like the flimsy, self-satisfied repetition of an absurdity, which with its originality has lost its piquancy.

*A.* You have, I know, very little patience with others who differ from you, nor are you a very literal reporter of the arguments of those who happen to be on your side of the question. You were

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about to tell me the substance of Butler's answer to Helvetius's theory, if we can let the anachronism pass; and I have as yet only heard certain quaint and verbal distinctions of your own. I must still think that the most disinterested actions proceed from a selfish motive. A man feels distress at the sight of a beggar, and he parts with his money to remove this uneasiness. If he did not feel this distress in his own mind, he would take no steps to relieve the other's wants.

H. And pray, does he feel this distress in his own mind out of love to himself, or solely that he may have the pleasure of getting rid of it? The first *move* in the game of mutual obligation is evidently a social, not a selfish impulse, and I might rest the dispute here and insist upon going no farther till this step is got over, but it is not necessary. I have already told you the substance of Butler's answer to this common-place and plausible objection. He says, in his fine broad manly and yet unpretending mode of stating a question, that a living being may be supposed to be actuated either by mere sensations, having no reference to any one else, or else that having an idea and foresight of the consequences to others, he is influenced by and interested in those consequences only in so far as they have a distinct connexion with his own ultimate good, in both which cases, seeing that the motives and actions have both their origin and end in self, they may and must be properly denominated *selfish*. But where the motive is neither physically nor morally selfish, that is, where the impulse to act is neither excited by a physical sensation nor by a reflection on the consequence to accrue to the individual, it must be hard to say in what sense it can be called so, except in that sense already exploded, namely, that which would infer that an impulse of any kind is selfish merely because it acts upon some one, or that before we can entertain disinterested sympathy with another, we must feel no sympathy at all. Benevolence, generosity, compassion, friendship, &c. imply, says the Bishop, that we take an immediate and unfeigned interest in the welfare of others; that their pleasures give us pleasure; that their pains give us pain, barely to know of them, and from no thought about ourselves. But no! retort the advocates of self-love, this is not enough: before any person can pretend to the title of benevolent, generous, and so on, he must prove, that so far from taking the deepest and most heartfelt interest in the happiness of others, he has no feeling on the subject, that he is perfectly indifferent to their weal or woe; and then taking infinite pains and making unaccountable sacrifices for their good without caring one farthing about them, he might pass for heroic and disinterested. But if he lets it appear he has the smallest good-will towards them and acts

## SELF-LOVE AND BENEVOLENCE

upon it, he then becomes a merely selfish agent ; so that to establish a character for generosity, compassion, humanity, &c. in any of his actions, he must first plainly prove that he never felt the slightest twinge of any of these passions thrilling in his bosom. This, according to my author, is requiring men to act not from charitable motives, but from no motives at all. Such reasoning has not an appearance of philosophy, but rather of drivelling weakness or of tacit irony. For my part, I can conceive of no higher strain of generosity than that which justly and truly says, *Nil humani à me alienum puto*—but, according to your modern French friends and my old English ones, there is no difference between this and the most sordid selfishness ; for the instant a man takes an interest in another's welfare, he makes it his own, and all the merit and disinterestedness is gone. ' Greater love than this hath no man, that he should give his life for his friend.' It must be rather a fanciful sort of self-love that at any time sacrifices its own acknowledged and obvious interests for the sake of another.

A. Not in the least. The expression you have just used explains the whole mystery, and I think you must allow this yourself. The moment I sympathise with another, I do in strictness make his interest my own. The two things on this supposition become inseparable, and my gratification is identified with his advantage. Every one, in short, consults his particular taste and inclination, whatever may be its bias, or acts from the strongest motive. Regulus, as Helvetius has so ably demonstrated, would not have returned to Carthage, but that the idea of dishonour gave him more uneasiness than the apprehension of a violent death.

H. That is, had he not preferred the honour of his country to his own interest. Surely, when self-love by all accounts takes so very wide a range and embraces entirely new objects of a character so utterly opposed to its general circumscribed and paltry routine of action, it would be as well to designate it by some new and appropriate appellation, unless it were meant, by the intervention of the old and ambiguous term, to confound the important practical distinction which subsists between the puny circle of a man's physical sensations and private interests and the whole world of virtue and honour, and thus to bring back the last gradually and disingenuously within the verge of the former. Things without names are unapt to take root in the human mind : we are prone to reduce nature to the dimensions of language. If a feeling of a refined and romantic character is expressed by a gross and vulgar name, our habitual associations will be sure to degrade the first to the level of the last, instead of conforming to a forced and technical definition. But I beg to deny,

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not only that the objects in this case are the same, but that the principle is similar.

A. Do you then seriously pretend that the end of sympathy is not to get rid of the momentary uneasiness occasioned by the distress of another?

H. And has that uneasiness, I again ask, its source in self-love? If self-love were the only principle of action, we ought to receive no uneasiness from the pains of others, we ought to be wholly exempt from any such weakness: or the least that can be required to give the smallest shadow of excuse to this exclusive theory is, that the instant the pain was communicated by our foolish, indiscreet sympathy, we should think of nothing but getting rid of it as fast as possible, by fair means or foul, as a mechanical instinct. If the pain of sympathy, as soon as it arose, was decomposed from the objects which gave it birth, and acted upon the brain or nerves solely as a detached, desultory feeling, or abstracted sense of uneasiness, from which the mind shrunk with its natural aversion to pain, then I would allow that the impulse in this case, having no reference to the good of another, and seeking only to remove a present inconvenience from the individual, would still be properly self-love: but no such process of abstraction takes place. The feeling of compassion, as it first enters the mind, so it continues to act upon it in conjunction with the idea of what another suffers; refers every wish it forms or every effort it makes, to the removal of pain from a fellow-creature, and is only satisfied when it believes this end to be accomplished. It is not a blind, physical repugnance to pain, as affecting ourselves, but rational or intelligible conception of it as existing out of ourselves, that prompts and sustains our exertions in behalf of humanity. Nor can it be otherwise, while man is the creature of imagination and reason, and has faculties that implicate him (whether he will or not) in the pleasures and pains of others, and bind up his fate with theirs. Why, then, when an action or feeling is neither in its commencement nor progress, nor ultimate objects, dictated by or subject to the control of self-love, bestow the name where every thing but the name is wanting?

A. I must give you fair warning, that in this last *tirade* you have more than once gone beyond my comprehension. Your distinctions are too fine-drawn, and there is a want of relief in the expression. Are you not getting back to what you describe as your *first manner*? Your present style is more amusing. See if you cannot throw a few high lights into that last argument!

H. *Un peu plus à l'Anglaise*—any thing to oblige! I say, then, it appears to me strange that self-love should be asserted by any impartial

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reasoner, (not the dupe of a play upon words), to be absolute and undisputed master of the human mind, when compassion or uneasiness on account of others enters it without leave and in spite of this principle. What ! to be instantly expelled by it without mercy, so that it may still assert its pre-eminence ? No ; but to linger there, to hold consultation with another principle, Imagination, which owes no allegiance to self-interest, and to march out only under condition and guarantee that the welfare of another is first provided for without any special clause in its own favour. This is much as if you were to say and swear, that though the bailiff and his man have taken possession of your house, you are still the rightful owner of it.

*A.* And so I am.

*H.* Why, then, not turn out such unwelcome intruders without standing upon ceremony ?

*A.* You were too vague and abstracted before : now you are growing too figurative. Always in extremes.

*H.* Give me leave for a moment, as you will not let me spin mere metaphysical cobwebs.

*A.* I am patient.

*H.* Suppose that by sudden transformation your body were so contrived that it could feel the actual sensations of another body, as if your nerves had an immediate and physical communication ; that you were assailed by a number of objects you saw and knew nothing of before, and felt desires and appetites springing up in your bosom for which you could not at all account—would you not say that this addition of another body made a material alteration in your former situation ; that it called for a new set of precautions and instincts to provide for its wants and wishes ? or would you persist in it that you were just where you were, that no change had taken place in your being and interests, and that your new body was in fact your old one, for no other reason than because it was yours ? To my thinking, the case would be quite altered by the supererogation of such a new sympathetic body, and I should be for dividing my care and time pretty equally between them.

*Captain B.* You mean that in that case you would have taken in partners to the concern, as well as No. I. ?

*H.* Yes ; and my concern for No. II. would be something very distinct from, and quite independent of, my original and hitherto exclusive concern for No. I.

*A.* How very gross and vulgar ! (whispering to L——, and then turning to me, added,)—but why suppose an impossibility ? I hate all such incongruous and far-fetched illustrations.

*H.* And yet this very miracle takes place every day in the human

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mind and heart, and you and your sophists would persuade us that it is nothing, and would slur over its existence by a shallow misnomer. Do I not by imaginary sympathy acquire a new interest (out of myself) in others as much as I should on the former supposition by physical contact or animal magnetism? and am I not compelled by this new law of my nature (neither included in physical sensation nor a deliberate regard to my own individual welfare) to consult the feelings and wishes of the new social body of which I am become a member, often to the prejudice of my own? The parallel seems to me exact, and I think the inference from it unavoidable. I do not postpone a benevolent or friendly purpose to my own personal convenience, or make it bend to it—

‘ Letting *I should not* wait upon *I would*  
Like the poor cat in the adage.’

The will is amenable not to our immediate sensibility but to reason and imagination, which point out and enforce a line of duty very different from that prescribed by self-love. The operation of sympathy or social feeling, though it has its seat certainly in the mind of the individual, is neither for his immediate behalf nor to his remote benefit, but is constantly a diversion from both, and therefore, I contend, is not in any sense selfish. The movements in my breast as much originate in, and are regulated by, the *idea* of what another feels, as if they were governed by a chord placed there vibrating to another’s pain. If these movements were mechanical, they would be considered as directed to the good of another: it is odd, that because my bosom takes part and beats in unison with them, they should become of a less generous character. In the passions of hatred, resentment, sullenness, or even in low spirits, we voluntarily go through a great deal of pain, because *such is our pleasure*; or strictly, because certain objects have taken hold of our imagination, and we cannot, or will not, get rid of the impression: why should good-nature and generosity be the only feelings in which we will not allow a little forgetfulness of ourselves? Once more. If self-love, or each individual’s sensibility, sympathy, what you will, were like an animalcule, sensitive, quick, shrinking instantly from whatever gave it pain, seeking instinctively whatever gave it pleasure, and having no other obligation or law of its existence, then I should be most ready to acknowledge that this principle was in its nature, end, and origin, selfish, slippery, treacherous, inert, inoperative but as an instrument of some immediate stimulus, incapable of generous sacrifice or painful exertion, and deserving a name and title accordingly, leading one to bestow upon it its proper attributes. But the very reverse of all this

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happens. The mind is tenacious of remote purposes, indifferent to immediate feelings, which cannot consist with the nature of a rational and voluntary agent. Instead of the animalcule swimming in pleasure and gliding from pain, the principle of self-love is incessantly to the imagination or sense of duty what the fly is to the spider—that fixes its stings into it, involves it in its web, sucks its blood, and preys upon its vitals! Does the spider do all this to please the fly? Just as much as Regulus returned to Carthage and was rolled down a hill in a barrel with iron spikes in it to please himself! The imagination or understanding is no less the enemy of our pleasure than of our interest. It will not let us be at ease till we have accomplished certain objects with which we have ourselves no concern but as melancholy truths.

*A.* But the spider you have so quaintly conjured up is a different animal from the fly. The imagination on which you lay so much stress is a part of one's-self.

*H.* I grant it: and for that very reason, self-love, or a principle tending exclusively to our own immediate gratification or future advantage, neither is nor can be the sole spring of action in the human mind.

*A.* I cannot see that at all.

*L.* Nay, I think he has made it out better than usual.

*H.* Imagination is another name for an interest in things out of ourselves, which must naturally run counter to our own. Self-love, for so fine and smooth-spoken a gentleman, leads his friends into odd scrapes. The situation of Regulus in a barrel with iron-spikes in it was not a very easy one: but, say the advocates of refined self-love, their points were a succession of agreeable punctures in his sides, compared with the stings of dishonour. But what bound him to this dreadful alternative? Not self-love. When the pursuit of honour becomes troublesome, 'throw honour to the dogs—I'll none of it!' This seems the true Epicurean solution. Philosophical self-love seems neither a voluptuary nor an effeminate coward, but a cynic, and even a martyr, so that I am afraid he will hardly dare show his face at Very's, and that, with this knowledge of his character, even the countenance of the Count de Stutt-Tracy will not procure his admission to the saloons.

*A.* The Count de Stutt-Tracy, did you say? Who is he? I never heard of him.

*H.* He is the author of the celebrated 'Idéologic,' which Bonaparte denounced to the Chamber of Peers as the cause of his disasters in Russia. He is equally hated by the Bourbons; and what is more extraordinary still, he is patronised by Ferdinand VII. who settled a

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pension of two hundred crowns a year on the translator of his works. He speaks of Condillac as having 'created the science of Ideology,' and holds Helvetius for a true philosopher.

A. Which you do not ! I think it a pity you should affect singularity of opinion in such matters, when you have all the most sensible and best-informed judges against you.

H. I am sorry for it too ; but I am afraid I can hardly expect you with me, till I have all Europe on my side, of which I see no chance while the Englishman with his notions of solid beef and pudding holds fast by his substantial identity, and the Frenchman with his lighter food and air mistakes every shadowy impulse for himself.

### THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

*The New Monthly Magazine.*

*December, 1828.*

L. You deny, I think, that personal identity, in the qualified way in which you think proper to admit it, is any ground for the doctrine of self-interest ?

H. Yes, in an exclusive and absolute sense I do undoubtedly, that is, in the sense in which it is affirmed by metaphysicians, and ordinarily believed in.

L. Could you not go over the ground briefly, without entering into technicalities ?

H. Not easily : but stop me when I entangle myself in difficulties. A person fancies, or feels habitually, that he has a positive, substantial interest in his own welfare, (generally speaking) just as much as he has in any actual sensation that he feels, because he is always and necessarily the same self. What is his interest at one time is therefore equally *his* interest at all other times. This is taken for granted as a self-evident proposition. Say he does not feel a particular benefit or injury at this present moment, yet it is he who is to feel it, which comes to the same thing. Where there is this continued identity of person, there must also be a correspondent identity of interest. I have an abstract, unavoidable interest in whatever can befall myself, which I can have or feel in no other person living, because I am always under every possible circumstance the self-same individual, and not any other individual whatsoever. In short, this word *self* (so closely do a number of associations cling round it and cement it together) is supposed to represent as it were a given concrete substance, as much one thing as any thing in nature can possibly be, and the centre or *stratum* in which the different im-



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pressions and ramifications of my being meet and are indissolubly knit together.

*A.* And you propose then seriously to take 'this one entire and perfect chrysolite,' this self, this 'precious jewel of the soul,' this rock on which mankind have built their faith for ages, and at one blow shatter it to pieces with the sledge-hammer, or displace it from its hold in the imagination with the wrenching-irons of metaphysics?

*H.* I am willing to use my best endeavours for that purpose.

*L.* You really ought: for you have the prejudices of the whole world against you.

*H.* I grant the prejudices are formidable; and I should despair, did I not think the reasons even stronger. Besides, without altering the opinions of the whole world, I might be contented with the suffrages of one or two intelligent people.

*L.* Nay, you will prevail by flattery, if not by argument.

*A.* That is something newer than all the rest.

*H.* 'Plain truth,' dear A——, 'needs no flowers of speech.'

*L.* Let me rightly understand you. Do you mean to say that I am not C. L. and that you are not W. H. or that we shall not both of us remain so to the end of the chapter, without a possibility of ever changing places with each other?

*H.* I am afraid, if you go to that, there is very little chance that

*'I shall be ever mistaken for you.'*

But with all this precise individuality and inviolable identity that you speak of, let me ask, Are you not a little changed (less so, it is true, than most people) from what you were twenty years ago? Or do you expect to appear the same that you are now twenty years hence?

*L.* 'No more of that if thou lovest me.' We know what we are, but we know not what we shall be.

*H.* A truce then; but be assured that whenever you happen to fling up your part, there will be no other person found to attempt it after you.

*L.* Pray, favour us with your paradox without farther preface.

*H.* I will then try to match my paradox against your prejudice, which as it is armed all in proof, to make any impression on it, I must, I suppose, take aim at the rivets; and if I can hit them, if I do not (round and smooth as it is) cut it into three pieces, and show that two parts in three are substance and the third and principal part shadow, never believe me again. Your real self ends exactly where your pretended self-interest begins; and in calculating upon this principle as a solid, permanent, absolute, self-evident truth, you are mocked with a name.

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*L.* How so? I hear, but do not see.

*H.* You must allow that this identical, indivisible, ostensible self is at any rate distinguishable into three parts,—the past, the present, and future?

*L.* I see no particular harm in that.

*H.* It is nearly all I ask. Well then, I admit that you have a peculiar, emphatic, incommunicable and exclusive interest or fellow-feeling in the two first of these selves; but I deny resolutely and unequivocally that you have any such natural, absolute, unavoidable, and mechanical interest in the last self, or in your future being, the interest you take in it being necessarily the offspring of understanding and imagination (aided by habit and circumstances), like that which you take in the welfare of others, and yet this last interest is the only one that is ever the object of rational and voluntary pursuit, or that ever comes into competition with the interests of others.

*L.* I am still to seek for the connecting clue.

*H.* I am almost ashamed to ask for your attention to a statement so very plain that it seems to border on a truism. I have an interest of a peculiar and limited nature in my present self, inasmuch as I feel my actual sensations not simply in a degree, but in a way and by means of faculties which afford me not the smallest intimation of the sensations of others. I cannot possibly feel the sensations of any one else, nor consequently take the slightest interest in them as such. I have no nerves communicating with another's brain, and transmitting to me either the glow of pleasure or the agony of pain which he may feel at the present moment by means of his senses. So far, therefore, namely, so far as my present self or immediate sensations are concerned, I am cut off from all sympathy with others. I stand alone in the world, a perfectly insulated individual, necessarily and in the most unqualified sense indifferent to all that passes around me, and that does not in the first instance affect myself, for otherwise I neither have nor can have the remotest consciousness of it as a matter of organic sensation, any more than the mole has of light or the deaf adder of sounds.

*L.* Spoken like an oracle.

*H.* Again, I have a similar peculiar, mechanical, and untransferable interest in my past self, because I remember and can dwell upon my past sensations (even after the objects are removed) also in a way and by means of faculties which do not give me the smallest insight into or sympathy with the past feelings of others. I may conjecture and fancy what those feelings have been; and so I do. But I have no *memory* or continued consciousness of what either of good or evil may have found a place in their bosoms, no secret spring that touched

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vibrates to the hopes and wishes that are no more, unlocks the chambers of the past with the same assurance of reality, or identifies my feelings with theirs in the same intimate manner as with those which I have already felt in my own person. Here again, then, there is a real, undoubted, original and positive foundation for the notion of self to rest upon ; for in relation to my former self and past feelings, I do possess a faculty which serves to unite me more especially to my own being, and at the same time draws a distinct and impassable line around that being, separating it from every other. A door of communication stands always open between my present consciousness and my past feelings, which is locked and barred by the hand of Nature and the constitution of the human understanding against the intrusion of any straggling impressions from the minds of others. I can only see into their real history darkly and by reflection. To sympathise with their joys or sorrows, and place myself in their situation either now or formerly, I must proceed by guess-work, and borrow the use of the common faculty of imagination. I am ready to acknowledge, then, that in what regards the past as well as the present, there is a strict metaphysical distinction between myself and others, and that my personal identity so far, or in the close, continued, inseparable connection between my past and present impressions, is firmly and irrevocably established.

*L.* You go on swimmingly. So far all is sufficiently clear.

*H.* But now comes the rub : for beyond that point I deny that the doctrine of personal identity or self-interest (as a consequence from it) has any foundation to rest upon but a confusion of names and ideas. It has none in the nature of things or of the human mind. For I have no faculty by which I can project myself into the future, or hold the same sort of palpable, tangible, immediate, and exclusive communication with my future feelings, in the same manner as I am made to feel the present moment by means of the senses, or the past moment by means of memory. If I have any such faculty, expressly set apart for the purpose, name it. If I have no such faculty, I can have no such interest. In order that I may possess a proper personal identity so as to live, breathe, and feel along the whole line of my existence in the same intense and intimate mode, it is absolutely necessary to have some general medium or faculty by which my successive impressions are blended and amalgamated together, and to maintain and support this extraordinary interest. But so far from there being any foundation for this merging and incorporating of my future in my present self, there is no link of connection, no sympathy, no reaction, no mutual consciousness between them, nor even a possibility of any thing of the kind, in a mechanical and personal sense.

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Up to the present point, the spot on which we stand, the doctrine of personal identity holds good ; hitherto the proud and exclusive pretensions of self ' come, but no farther.' The rest is air, is nothing, is a name, or but the common ground of reason and humanity. If I wish to pass beyond this point and look into my own future lot, or anticipate my future weal or woe before it has had an existence, I can do so by means of the same faculties by which I enter into and identify myself with the welfare, the being, and interests of others, but only by these. As I have already said, I have no particular organ or faculty of self-interest, in that case made and provided. I have no sensation of what is to happen to myself in future, no presentiment of it, no instinctive sympathy with it, nor consequently any abstract and unavoidable self-interest in it. Now mark. It is only in regard to my past and present being, that a broad and insurmountable barrier is placed between myself and others : as to future objects, there is no absolute and fundamental distinction whatever. But it is only these last that are the objects of any rational or practical interest. The idea of self properly attaches to objects of sense or memory, but these can never be the objects of action or of voluntary pursuit, which must, by the supposition, have an eye to future events. But with respect to these the chain of self-interest is dissolved and falls in pieces by the very necessity of our nature, and our obligations to self as a blind, mechanical, unsociable principle are lost in the general law which binds us to the pursuit of good as it comes within our reach and knowledge.

*A.* A most lame and impotent conclusion, I must say. Do you mean to affirm that you have really the same interest in another's welfare that you have in your own ?

*H.* I do not wish to assert any thing without proof. Will you tell me, if you have this particular interest in yourself, what faculty is it that gives it you—to what conjuration and what mighty magic it is owing—or whether it is merely the name of self that is to be considered as a proof of all the absurdities and impossibilities that can be drawn from it ?

*A.* I do not see that you have hitherto pointed out any.

*H.* What ! not the impossibility that you should be another being, with whom you have not a particle of fellow-feeling ?

*A.* Another being ! Yes, I know it is always impossible for me to be another being.

*H.* Ay, or yourself either, without such a fellow-feeling, for it is that which constitutes self. If not, explain to me what you mean by self. But it is more convenient for you to let that magical sound lie involved in the obscurity of prejudice and language. You will please

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to take notice that it is not I who commence these hairbreadth distinctions and special-pleading. I take the old ground of common sense and natural feeling, and maintain that though in a popular, practical sense mankind are strongly swayed by self-interest, yet in the same ordinary sense they are also governed by motives of goodness, compassion, friendship, virtue, honour, &c. Now all this is denied by your modern metaphysicians, who would reduce every thing to abstract self-interest, and exclude every other mixed motive or social tie in a strict, philosophical sense. They would drive me from my ground by scholastic subtleties and newfangled phrases; am I to blame then if I take them at their word, and try to foil them at their own weapons? Either stick to the unpretending *jog-trot* notions on the subject, or if you are determined to refine in analysing words and arguments, do not be angry if I follow the example set me, or even go a little farther to arrive at the truth. Shall we proceed on this understanding?

*A.* As you please.

*H.* We have got so far then (if I mistake not, and if there is not some flaw in the argument which I am unable to detect) that the past and present (which alone can appeal to our selfish faculties) are not the objects of action, and that the future (which can alone be the object of practical pursuit) has no particular claim or hold upon self. All action, all passion, all morality and self-interest, is prospective.

*A.* You have not made that point quite clear. What then is meant by a present interest, by the gratification of the present moment, as opposed to a future one?

*H.* Nothing, in a strict sense; or rather in common speech, you mean a near one, the interest of the next moment, the next hour, the next day, the next year, as it happens.

*A.* What! would you have me believe that I snatch my hand out of the flame of a candle from a calculation of future consequences?

*L. (laughing).* *A*—— had better not meddle with that question. *H*—— is in his element there. It is his old and favourite illustration.

*H.* Do you not snatch your hand out of the fire to procure ease from pain?

*A.* No doubt, I do.

*H.* And is not this case subsequent to the act, and the act itself to the feeling of pain, which caused it?

*A.* It may be so; but the interval is so slight that we are not sensible of it.

*H.* Nature is nicer in her distinctions than we. Thus you could not lift the food to your mouth, but upon the same principle. The viands are indeed tempting, but if it were the sight or smell of these

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alone that attracted you, you would remain satisfied with them. But you use means to ends, neither of which exist till you employ or produce them, and which would never exist if the understanding which foresees them did not run on before the actual objects and purvey to appetite. If you say it is habit, it is partly so; but that habit would never have been formed, were it not for the connection between cause and effect, which always takes place in the order of time, or of what Hume calls *antecedents* and *consequents*.

A. I confess I think this a mighty microscopic way of looking at the subject.

H. Yet you object equally to more vague and sweeping generalities. Let me, however, endeavour to draw the knot a little tighter, as it has a considerable weight to bear—no less, in my opinion, than the whole world of moral sentiments. All voluntary action must relate to the future: but the future can only exist or influence the mind as an object of imagination and forethought; therefore the motive to voluntary action, to all that we seek or shun, must be in all cases *ideal* and problematical. The thing itself which is an object of pursuit can never co-exist with the motives which make it an object of pursuit. No one will say that the past can be an object either of prevention or pursuit. It may be a subject of involuntary regrets, or may give rise to the starts and flaws of passion; but we cannot set about seriously recalling or altering it. Neither can that which at present exists, or is an object of sensation, be at the same time an object of action or of volition, since if it *is*, no volition or exertion of mine can for the instant make it to be other than it is. I can make it *cease* to be indeed, but this relates to the future, to the supposed non-existence of the object, and not to its actual impression on me. For a thing to be *willed*, it must necessarily not be. Over my past and present impressions my will has no control: they are placed, according to the poet, beyond the reach of fate, much more of human means. In order that I may take an effectual and consistent interest in any thing, that it may be an object of hope or fear, of desire or dread, it must be a thing still to come, a thing still in doubt, depending on circumstances and the means used to bring about or avert it. It is my will that determines its existence or the contrary (otherwise there would be no use in troubling oneself about it); it does not itself lay its peremptory, inexorable mandates on my will. For it is as yet (and must be in order to be the rational object of a moment's deliberation) a non-entity, a possibility merely, and it is plain that nothing can be the cause of nothing. That which is not, cannot act, much less can it act mechanically, physically, all-powerfully. So far is it from being true that a real and practical interest

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in any thing are convertible terms, that a practical interest can never by any possible chance be a real one, that is, excited by the presence of a real object or by mechanical sympathy. I cannot assuredly be induced by a present object to take means to make it exist—it can be no more than present to me—or if it is past, it is too late to think of recovering the occasion or preventing it now. But the future, the future is all our own; or rather it belongs equally to others. The world of action then, of business or pleasure, of self-love or benevolence, is not made up of solid materials, moved by downright, solid springs; it is essentially a void, an unreal mockery, both in regard to ourselves and others, except as it is filled up, animated, and set in motion by human thoughts and purposes. The ingredients of passion, action, and properly of interest are never positive, palpable matters-of-fact, concrete existences, but symbolical representations of events lodged in the bosom of futurity, and teaching us, by timely anticipation and watchful zeal, to build up the fabric of our own or others' future weal.

*A.* Do we not sometimes plot their woe with at least equal goodwill?

*H.* Not much oftener than we are accessory to our own.

*A.* I must say that savours more to me of an antithesis than of an answer.

*H.* For once, be it so.

*A.* But surely there is a difference between a real and an imaginary interest? A history is not a romance.

*H.* Yes; but in this sense the feelings and interests of others are in the end as real, as much matters of fact as mine or yours can be. The history of the world is not a romance, though you and I have had only a small share in it. You would turn every thing into autobiography. The interests of others are no more chimerical, visionary, fantastic than my own, being founded in truth, and both are brought home to my bosom in the same way by the force of imagination and sympathy.

*L.* But in addition to all this sympathy that you make such a rout about, it is *I* who am to feel a real, downright interest in my own future good, and I shall feel no such interest in another person's. Does not this make a wide, nay a total difference in the case? Am I to have no more affection for my own flesh and blood than for another's?

*H.* This would indeed make an entire difference in the case, if your interest in your own good were founded in your affection for yourself, and not your affection for yourself in your attachment to your own good. If you were attached to your own good merely because it was *yours*, I do not see why you should not be equally

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attached to your own ill—both are equally yours ! Your own person or that of others would, I take it, be alike indifferent to you, but for the degree of sympathy you have with the feelings of either. Take away the sense or apprehension of pleasure and pain, and you would care no more about yourself than you do about the hair of your head or the paring of your nails, the parting with which gives you no sensible uneasiness at the time or on after-reflection.

*L.* But up to the present moment you allow that I have a particular interest in my proper self. Where then am I to stop, or how draw the line between my real and my imaginary identity ?

*H.* The line is drawn for you by the nature of things. Or if the difference between reality and imagination is so small that you cannot perceive it, it only shows the strength of the latter. Certain it is that we can no more anticipate our future being than we change places with another individual, except in an *ideal* and figurative sense. But it is just as impossible that I should have an actual sensation of and interest in my future feelings as that I should have an actual sensation of and interest in what another feels at the present instant. An essential and irreconcilable difference in our primary faculties forbids it. The future, were it the next moment, were it an object nearest and dearest to our hearts, is a dull blank, opaque, impervious to sense as an object close to the eye of the blind, did not the ray of reason and reflection enlighten it. We can never say to its fleeting, painted essence, ‘Come, let me clutch thee !’ it is a thing of air, a phantom that flies before us, and we follow it, and with respect to all but our past and present sensations, which are no longer any thing to action, we totter on the brink of nothing. That self which we project before us into it, that we make our proxy or representative, and empower to embody, and transmit back to us all our real, substantial interests before they have had an existence, except in our imaginations, is but a shadow of ourselves, a bundle of habits, passions, and prejudices, a body that falls in pieces at the touch of reason or the approach of inquiry. It is true, we do build up such an imaginary self, and a proportionable interest in it ; we clothe it with the associations of the past and present, we disguise it in the drapery of language, we add to it the strength of passion and the warmth of affection, till we at length come to class our whole existence under one head, and fancy our future history a solid, permanent, and actual continuation of our immediate being, but all this only proves the force of imagination and habit to build up such a structure on a merely partial foundation, and does not alter the true nature and distinction of things. On the same foundation are built up nearly as high natural affection, friendship, the love of country, of



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religion, &c. But of this presently. What shows that the doctrine of self-interest, however high it may rear its head, or however impregnable it may seem to attack, is a mere 'contradiction,'

'In terms a fallacy, in fact a fiction.'

is this single consideration, that we never know what is to happen to us before-hand, no, not even for a moment, and that we cannot so much as tell whether we shall be alive a year, a month, or a day hence. We have no presentiment of what awaits us, making us feel the future in the instant. Indeed such an insight into futurity would be inconsistent with itself, or we must become mere passive instruments in the hands of fate. A house may fall on my head as I go from this, I may be crushed to pieces by a carriage running over me, or I may receive a piece of news that is death to my hopes before another four-and-twenty hours are passed over, and yet I feel nothing of the blow that is thus to stagger and stun me. I laugh and am well. I have no warning given me either of the course or the consequence (in truth if I had, I should, if possible, avoid it). This continued self-interest that watches over all my concerns alike, past, present, and future, and concentrates them all in one powerful and invariable principle of action, is useless here, leaves me at a loss at my greatest need, is torpid, silent, dead, and I have no more consciousness of what so nearly affects me, and no more care about it, (till I find out my danger by other and natural means,) than if no such thing were ever to happen, or were to happen to the Man in the Moon.

'And coming events cast their shadows before.'

This beautiful line is not verified in the ordinary prose of life. That it is not, is a staggering consideration for your fine, practical, instinctive, abstracted, comprehensive, uniform principle of self-interest. Don't you think so, L——?

L. I shall not answer you. Am I to give up my existence for an idle sophism? You heap riddle upon riddle; but I am mystery-proof. I still feel my personal identity as I do the chair I sit on, though I am enveloped in a cloud of smoke and words. Let me have your answer to a plain question.—Suppose I were actually to see a coach coming along and I was in danger of being run over, what I want to know is, should I not try to save myself sooner than any other person?

H. No, you would first try to save a sister, if she were with you.

A. Surely that would be a very rare instance of self, though I do not deny it.

H. I do not think so. I believe there is hardly any one who does

## SELF-LOVE AND BENEVOLENCE

not prefer some one to themselves. For example, let us look into *Waverley*.

*A.* Ay, that is the way that you take your ideas of philosophy, from novels and romances, as if they were sound evidence.

*H.* If my conclusions are as true to nature as my premises, I shall be satisfied. Here is the passage I was going to quote : ' I was only ganging to say, my lord,' said Evan, in what he meant to be an insinuating manner, ' that if your excellent honour and the honourable court would let Vich Ian Vohr go free just this once and let him gae back to France and not trouble King George's government again, that any six o' the very best of his clan will be willing to be justified in his stead ; and if you'll just let me gae down to Glennaquoich, I'll fetch them up to ye myself to head or hang, and you may begin with me the very first man.'<sup>1</sup>

*A.* But such instances as this are the effect of habit and strong prejudice. We can hardly argue from so barbarous a state of society.

*H.* Excuse me there. I contend that our preference of ourselves is just as much the effect of habit, and very frequently a more unaccountable and unreasonable one than any other.

*A.* I should like to hear how you can possibly make that out.

*H.* If you will not condemn me before you hear what I have to say, I will try. You allow that L——, in the case we have been talking of, would perhaps run a little risk for you or me ; but if it were a perfect stranger, he would get out of the way as fast as his legs would carry him, and leave the stranger to shift for himself.

*A.* Yes ; and does not that overturn your whole theory ?

*H.* It would if my theory were as devoid of common sense as you are pleased to suppose ; that is, if because I deny an original and absolute distinction in nature (where there is no such thing,) it followed that I must deny that circumstances, intimacy, habit, knowledge, or a variety of incidental causes could have any influence on our affections and actions. My inference is just the contrary. For would you not say that L—— cared little about the stranger for this plain reason, that he knew nothing about him ?

*A.* No doubt.

*H.* And he would care rather more about you and me, because he knows more about us ?

*A.* Why yes, it would seem so.

*H.* And he would care still more about a sister, (according to the same supposition) because he would be still better acquainted with her, and had been more constantly with her ?

*A.* I will not deny it.

<sup>1</sup> *Waverley*, vol. iii, p. 201.

## SELF-LOVE AND BENEVOLENCE

*H.* And it is on the same principle (generally speaking) that a man cares most of all about himself, because he knows more about himself than about any body else, that he is more in the secret of his own most intimate thoughts and feelings, and more in the habit of providing for his own wants and wishes, which he can anticipate with greater liveliness and certainty than those of others, from being more nearly 'made and moulded of things past.' The poetical fiction is rendered easier and assisted by my acquaintance with myself, just as it is by the ties of kindred or habits of friendly intercourse. There is no farther approach made to the doctrines of self-love and personal identity.

*L.* M——, here is *H*—— trying to persuade me I am not myself.

*M.* Sometimes you are not.

*L.* But he says that I never am.—Or is it only that I am not to be so?

*H.* Nay, I hope 'thou art to continue, thou naughty varlet'—

'Here and hereafter, if the last may be!'

You have been yourself (nobody like you) for the last forty years of your life: you would not prematurely stuff the next twenty into the account, till you have had them fairly out?

*L.* Not for the world, I have too great an affection for them.

*H.* Yet I think you would have less if you did not look forward to pass them among old books, old friends, old haunts. If you were cut off from all these, you would be less anxious about what was left of yourself.

*L.* I would rather be the *Wandering Jew* than not be at all.

*H.* Or you would not be the person I always took you for.

*L.* Does not this willingness to be the *Wandering Jew* rather than nobody, seem to indicate that there is an abstract attachment to self, to the bare idea of existence, independently of circumstances or habit?

*H.* It must be a very loose and straggling one. You mix up some of your old recollections and favourite notions with your self elect, and indulge them in your new character, or you would trouble yourself very little about it. If you do not come in in some shape or other, it is merely saying that you would be sorry if the *Wandering Jew* were to disappear from the earth, however strictly he may have hitherto maintained his *incognito*.

*L.* There is something in that; and as well as I remember there is a curious but exceedingly mystical illustration of this point in an original Essay of yours which I have read and spoken to you about.

*H.* I believe there is; but *A*—— is tired of making objections, and I of answering them to no purpose.

## SELF-LOVE AND BENEVOLENCE

*L.* I have the book in the closet, and if you like, we will turn to the place. It is after that burst of enthusiastic recollection (the only one in the book) that Southey said at the time was something between the manner of Milton's prose-works and Jeremy Taylor.

*H.* Ah! I as little thought then that I should ever be set down as a florid prose-writer as that he would become poet-laureat!

*J. L.* here took the volume from his brother, and read the following passage from it.

'I do not think I should illustrate the foregoing reasoning so well by any thing I could add on the subject, as by relating the manner in which it first struck me. There are moments in the life of a solitary thinker which are to him what the evening of some great victory is to the conqueror and hero—milder triumphs long remembered with truer and deeper delight. And though the shouts of multitudes do not hail his success—though gay trophies, though the sounds of music, the glittering of armour, and the neighing of steeds do not mingle with his joy, yet shall he not want monuments and witnesses of his glory—the deep forest, the willowy brook, the gathering clouds of winter, or the silent gloom of his own chamber, "faithful remembrancers of his high endeavour, and his glad success," that, as time passes by him with unreturning wing, still awaken the consciousness of a spirit patient, indefatigable in the search of truth, and the hope of surviving in the thoughts and minds of other men. I remember I had been reading a speech which Mirabaud (the author of the "System of Nature") has put into the mouth of a supposed Atheist at the last judgment; and was afterwards led on, by some means or other to consider the question, whether it could properly be said to be an act of virtue in any one to sacrifice his own final happiness to that of any other person or number of persons, if it were possible for the one ever to be made the price of the other? Suppose it were my own case—that it were in my power to save twenty other persons by voluntarily consenting to suffer for them: Why should I not do a generous thing, and never trouble myself about what might be the consequence to myself the Lord knows when?

'The reason why a man should prefer his own future welfare to that of others is, that he has a necessary, absolute interest in the one, which he cannot have in the other—and this, again, is a consequence of his being always the same individual, of his continued identity with himself. The difference, I thought, was this, that however insensible I may be to my own interest at any future period, yet when the time comes I shall feel differently about it. I shall then judge of it from the actual impression of the object, that is, truly and certainly; and

## SELF-LOVE AND BENEVOLENCE

as I shall still be conscious of my past feelings, and shall bitterly regret my own folly and insensibility, I ought, as a rational agent, to be determined now by what I shall then wish I had done, when I shall feel the consequences of my actions most deeply and sensibly. It is this continued consciousness of my own feelings which gives me an immediate interest in whatever relates to my future welfare, and makes me at all times accountable to myself for my own conduct. As, therefore, this consciousness will be renewed in me after death, if I exist again at all—But stop—as I must be conscious of my past feelings to be myself, and as this conscious being will be myself, how if that consciousness should be transferred to some other being? How am I to know that I am not imposed upon by a false claim of identity? But that is ridiculous, because you will have no other self than that which arises from this very consciousness. Why, then, this self may be multiplied in as many different beings as the Deity may think proper to endue with the same consciousness; which, if it can be renewed at will in any one instance, may clearly be so in a hundred others. Am I to regard all these as equally myself? Am I equally interested in the fate of all? Of if I must fix upon some one of them in particular as my representative and other self, how am I to be determined in my choice? Here, then, I saw an end put to my speculations about absolute self-interest and personal identity. I saw plainly that the consciousness of my own feelings, which is made the foundation of my continued interest in them, could not extend to what had never been, and might never be; that my identity with myself must be confined to the connection between my past and present being; that with respect to my future feelings or interests, they could have no communication with, or influence over, my present feelings and interests, merely because they were future; that I shall be hereafter affected by the recollection of my past feelings and actions; and my remorse be equally heightened by reflecting on my past folly and late-earned wisdom, whether I am really the same being, or have only the same consciousness renewed in me; but that to suppose that this remorse can re-act in the reverse order on my present feelings, or give me an immediate interest in my future feelings, before they exist, is an express contradiction in terms. It can only affect me as an imaginary idea, or an idea of truth. But so may the interests of others; and the question proposed was, whether I have not some real, necessary, absolute interest in whatever relates to my future being, in consequence of my immediate connection with myself—independently of the general impression which all positive ideas have on my mind. How, then, can this pretended unity of consciousness which is only reflected from the past—which makes me

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so little acquainted with the future that I cannot even tell for a moment how long it will be continued, whether it will be entirely interrupted by or renewed in me after death, and which might be multiplied in I don't know how many different beings, and prolonged by complicated sufferings, without my being any the wiser for it,—how, I say, can a principle of this sort identify my present with my future interests, and make me as much a participator in what does not at all affect me as if it were actually impressed on my senses? It is plain, as this conscious being may be decomposed, entirely destroyed, renewed again, or multiplied in a great number of beings, and as, whichever of these takes place, it cannot produce the least alteration in my present being—that what I am does not depend on what I am to be, and that there is no communication between my future interests, and the motives by which my present conduct must be governed. This can no more be influenced by what may be my future feelings with respect to it, than it will then be possible for me to alter my past conduct by wishing that I had acted differently. I cannot, therefore, have a principle of active self-interest arising out of the immediate connection between my present and future self, for no such connection exists, or is possible. I am what I am in spite of the future. My feelings, actions, and interests, must be determined by causes already existing and acting, and are absolutely independent of the future. Where there is not an intercommunity of feelings, there can be no identity of interests. My personal interest in any thing must refer either to the interest excited by the actual impression of the object, which cannot be felt before it exists, and can last no longer than while the impression lasts; or it may refer to the particular manner in which I am mechanically affected by the idea of my own impressions in the absence of the object. I can, therefore, have no proper personal interest in my future impressions, since neither my ideas of future objects, nor my feelings with respect to them, can be excited either directly or indirectly by the impressions themselves, or by any ideas or feelings accompanying them, without a complete transposition of the order in which causes and effects follow one another in nature. The only reason for my preferring my future interest to that of others, must arise from my anticipating it with greater warmth of present imagination. It is this greater liveliness and force with which I can enter into my future feelings, that in a manner identifies them with my present being; and this notion of identity being once formed, the mind makes use of it to strengthen its habitual propensity, by giving to personal motives a reality and absolute truth which they can never have. Hence it has been inferred that my real, substantial interest in any thing, must be

## A STUFFED MAN

derived in some indirect manner from the impression of the object itself, as if that could have any sort of communication with my present feelings, or excite any interest in my mind but by means of the imagination, which is naturally affected in a certain manner by the prospect of future good or evil.'

*J. L.* 'This is the strangest tale that e'er I heard.'

*C. L.* 'It is the strangest fellow, brother John !'

## A STUFFED MAN

*The London Weekly Review.*

*November 22, 1828.*

*Artist.* I don't know how it is, but I like to have all my things loose about me ; I hate the least restraint or confinement in my dress : now it's very odd to me, but — likes to have everything as tight about him as possible ; he'd have his clothes made to fit him like his skin.

*Philosopher.* Don't you know how that is ?

*Artist.* No, not at all.

*Philosopher.* I think I can explain it. Why, you are a shadow in comparison ; your body is nothing, and you do not want to be reminded of it ; you live on your ideas : whereas, if you existed more in the flesh than the spirit, and carried about with you a huge body and a gross one, then you would feel your existence in that, and would want to be reminded of it every moment. The tighter and more irksome the pressure, the stronger would be the sense of your material identity all over ; you would feel your person aggrandised, and with it your conscious self-importance would swell and spread out almost to bursting. On the contrary, a thought is free as air, asks only leave to breathe, and does not want something fastened tight round it to make it feel its own ethereal essence. Look at those fellows in the city, who live by eating and drinking alone,—whose God is their belly : see how they gorge and pamper a bloated mass of flesh, and then swathe and bandage themselves up to the very throat, till they are almost choked, to have a double sense of their own gross existence. They would almost like an indigestion to be a perpetual memento to them of city-dinners ; and that they are members of a corporate body.

*Artist.* Did you ever think of this before ?

*Philosopher.* No ; nor should I now, but for the contrast between you and such people.

*Artist.* It's very well though. But don't you imagine that the desire of elegance, of keeping down the redundancies of person, has something to do with it ?

## MR. COBBETT AND THE QUAKERS

*Philosopher.* Oh! you mean the Adonis air; no more of that: the topic was not safe fifteen years ago!

### MR. COBBETT AND THE QUAKERS

*The Atlas.*

December 21, 1828.

MR. COBBETT has just made one of his *dead-sets* at this inoffensive and (hitherto supposed) respectable body of men. He calls them *black-guards*: why? Because they are not; and he feels that this is precisely the point in which they have the advantage over their bullying antagonist. Mr. Cobbett's tongue is no slander: fortunately for the parties, and unfortunately for the rest of the world, the strong truths he utters are neutralised by the spirit of gross injustice that pervades them; and the lash which he proposes to let fall on the 'bare fat backs' of his victims, will wave harmlessly in the air! Our quietists will oppose the *vis inertiae* to all his outrageous efforts; they are wrapped up in a kind of fleecy-hosiery, both of body and mind, which is proof against argument or abuse—as wool-packs keep out cannon-balls—and a shower of *Registers*, steeped in squalid bile, will make no more impression on them than drops of rain on oil. They will only wonder what *Friend* Cobbett means; and if he gives them a reason, assuredly they will not understand it. The worst of Mr. Cobbett's abuse is, that it is generally provoked by some virtue or advantage in others, which torments his mental vision (as bulls, they say, run a-muck at scarlet), and he seizes the opportunity of the first slip or outcry to pay off the score of spite and ill-humour which has been accumulating in his breast with the number of their good qualities, or a long course of honour and prosperity. Whatever the Quakers may pretend, no one is exempted from paying down the forfeit of his character in the pages of the *Register*; nor are the arrears forgot. Mr. Cobbett must long have had an eye on the Quakers; he must have borne them a terrible grudge. Mr. Cobbett is a great admirer of cleanliness, and the Quakers are remarkably clean; they are a sober people, and Mr. Cobbett patronises sobriety by precept and example; they are industrious, and so is Mr. Cobbett; early risers, thrifty, domestic, moral—all which their reviler is or boasts of being. No wonder so many claims upon his approbation and sympathy should tire out his patience. Luckily, one of them is hanged, and he swears they ought all to be hanged, bastinadoed, or left to his discretion when he shall be Minister or Member of Parliament. What then would he teach them or force them to do? Would he make them go to the play, to study human character and passion—frequent con-



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certs, to hear divine airs—see pictures, and look at the sky, the ocean, and the green earth, and not be always thinking of their own drab-coloured coats—take up Gay, and Smollett, and Fielding, to relieve the perusal of the state of prison discipline and the accounts of the hulks—believe that there is some good as well as evil in the world, and that it is impossible to have the one without the other, and not to be always sitting in the stocks of morality, shrugging their shoulders and making mouths at human nature, without knowing the good or the evil contained in it? No; Mr. Cobbett himself hates poetry, music, painting, and dancing, Shakespeare and Milton, as much as they do: as to reading, he thinks the *Political Register* and tracts sufficient; as to employment, the growing of his Indian corn the most delightful thing in the world, and all useful and agreeable arts contained in the *Rural Economy*. The Quakers are, in fact, nearly all that he would have them, and this makes him so impatient with them; they are a castrated edition of the *Political Register*, without the malevolence, the calumny, the blackguardism, the baseness, the indecency, or the falsehood. As they are without these, out of his own superabundant store he bestows a plentiful sprinkling of them upon them: and as he is never contented unless he can make people do something *against the grain*, and in the pure spirit of contradiction, he would make them pay taxes voluntarily, he himself having formerly proposed to resist the income-tax; he would make them go for soldiers, he himself having got out of the army; he would make them swear (against their consciences), that their oaths might be as much believed as his word! The only fault of the Quakers is, their aiming systematically at an ideal perfection, and attempting to separate the practice of good from the knowledge of evil. You might as well have a river without banks, or write a letter without making black marks on the white paper. A Quaker pretends not to see a courtesan in the streets, and yet he understands all the value of chastity. Thus, ‘knowledge is at each common entrance quite shut out’—‘So much the rather thou, celestial light, shine inward’—but the miracle failing, the candidates for it are left in the dark, or in an obscure twilight between reason and revelation, ‘stupidly good’; or at worst, being cut off from the resources of pleasure and imagination, and as they cannot always soar to Heaven on angels’ wings, being somewhat ‘fat and puffy,’ sink to the earth, and become a little sordid and worldly-minded. As to Hunton, the only plea for him (as an exception) was his *respectability*—the most scoundrel plea on earth. That is, he was well educated, well off, and had no temptation to commit the crime—which are so many aggravations of it in the eye of justice, so many extenuations in the eye of the world. How

## MR. JEFFREY AND MR. OWEN

so? The distinction is explained by the phrase, '*l'Amphytrion où l'on dine!*' A million is subscribed to save a rich rogue—a halter for a poor one, is the word. It is the way of the world, according to the old proverb—'Those who have much shall have more; those that have little shall have less.' Wherever we see power, or its concomitants, we bow to it: wherever we see weakness, we are disposed to crush it, and to exult in the contrast (to which we try to give the last pungency) between the misery of others and our own self-complacency.

## MR. JEFFREY AND MR. OWEN

*The Atlas.*

December 28, 1828.

MR. JEFFREY, though a good-natured man, has a critical contempt for those who are candidates for his official notice. He has a prejudice against authors, as a justice of the peace has against poachers, and treats them in a light and cavalier tone when they are brought before him. It is seldom that in the *Edinburgh Review* there is an article purely laudatory: though, as his friend Tom Campbell wittily observed, the Editor has a few favourites whom he keeps like pet-lambs in a butcher's shop, and feeds with praises from his own hand. Mr. Owen, of Lanark, is not one of these; indeed, he would not let him figure in the *Review* at all, not even to be cut up, though Mr. Owen was anxious for the operation. The critic sometimes speaks sharply and pleasantly of the romantic cotton-spinner and castle-builder. 'I wish you would write another *critical* essay upon Owen; it helps to keep him off my hands. Hang the fellow! I never could get rid of him. He was determined to weary me out with his impertinence. If I went into the country to avoid him, he was there before me; if I returned to town, he followed me. If I made an excuse that I had to attend in court, I was no sooner there than I saw Owen facing me: if I went out, he stood at the door with outspread arms to receive me. Finding it hopeless to escape, I resolved to stand at bay, and said, "Well, Owen, what is it you want?" He modestly hinted, nothing more than a full, fair, and free representation of his new view of society and system of co-operation in the *Edinburgh Review*. I said to him, "Owen, you are perhaps acquainted with a principle of the ancient philosophy, which says that the cause contains all that there is in the effect. Now as you give yourself out as the author of a system which is to produce more happiness, wisdom, and virtue, than either do now exist, or ever did exist in the world, it follows that you must possess these qualities in the highest possible degree before you can communicate them to others, and,

## MEETING BETWEEN FOX AND GRATAN

I am not convinced of that part of the proposition, you must excuse me not being very sanguine as to the conclusion." Do you know, the fellow took me at my word, had the face to demur to my objection, was willing to abide by the test I had suggested, and desired me to name any individuals in ancient or modern history who had pretensions superior to himself? And when I did so, and pointed out several of his own acquaintance that I thought at least as wise, as good, and as happy as himself, he roundly denied the fact, and maintained that, by my own showing, I was bound to give him fifty pages of panegyric in the *Review*! The acuteness of the critic in this case, and the disappointment of it by the greater obtuseness of the subject with whom he has to deal, is equal to anything in the old comedy. It cannot be denied that Mr. Jeffrey hits off Owen well: the *caput mortuum* of the one serves as a foil for the volatile salt of the other. A grave Scotch professor, speaking in high terms of the cleanliness and healthy appearance of the children at New Lanark, said that he was so pleased that he patted one of the best-looking on the head, when Mr. Owen remarked, 'Aye, I see you are like the rest—you take most notice of those to whom nature has been most favourable; now I always encourage those to whom she has been least prodigal of her gifts.' 'Good!' said Jeffrey; '*Nature smiled upon the one, and Owen on the other!*'

## THE FIRST MEETING BETWEEN FOX AND GRATAN

*The Atlas.*

January 4, 1829.

THIS took place in Ireland, some time about the year 1780. Mr. Fox was over there on a visit to an Irish nobleman, and Mr. Grattan had been invited to give the meeting to the English orator and patriot, who was just then rising into celebrity and popular favour. It happened that on the day that Mr. Grattan came, Mr. Fox had rode over ten or a dozen miles from the country-seat of his noble friend to dine with the Bishop of —, in the neighbouring town, and was not expected to return till the following day. At dinner, however, where a large party had been collected, Mr. Fox and his reverend entertainer differed as to the political merits of some public character that was mentioned. Mr. Fox, who was at this time in the full glow of early enthusiasm, 'the rose and the expectancy of the fair state,' expressed signs of disgust and impatience, the moment the name was pronounced. The Bishop attempted an apology. Mr. Fox rejoined, and, kindling as he spoke, the cloud gathered on his brow, and the fire flashed from his eye, while epithets of no qualified abuse, and

## THE LATE MURDERS

denunciations of apostate patriots, flowed from his tongue. His host at length found himself obliged to declare that the politician alluded to so unceremoniously was his friend, and as the other still persisted, he got up and was about to leave the room. Mr. Fox, already on tip-toe with eloquence and indignation, immediately started from his seat, and said that this was quite unnecessary, as he would stay no longer in a house where characters of such a kind were screened from reprobation; and forthwith proceeded to execute his threat amidst a volley of parliamentary invective aimed at the Bishop's head, and 'the pitiless pelting of the storm' without, which fell on his own. It was 'a night to cool a courtesan,' but not a patriot. He would hear neither excuse nor entreaty, and refused all compromise or coalition with apostasy or its advocates. He set off in the middle of the night and the teeth of the storm with his servant following him; rode at full speed, and came suddenly, about two in the morning, like an apparition, into the room where the noble lord and his guest were still sitting up, engaged in deep discourse on liberty and its new and zealous champion. He burst into the drawing-room, uttering shouts of laughter and incoherent exclamation, saying, 'that he had beat the Bishop, and had run away from him into the bargain, and that he would never darken his doors again.' He was drenched in rain from head to foot as much as if he had been dipped in a river; was dressed in a blue silk coat, lined with white, in a white silk waistcoat, breeches and stockings, and red-heeled shoes, in which he had performed his journey; and all the while he was abusing the Bishop and exulting in his escape, he hurried up and down the apartment, shaking the moisture from a plume of feathers which he wore in his hat. Mr. Grattan, who was not more surprised at the arrival than at the youthful and elegant figure and fanciful costume of the future leader of Opposition, said that he gave one very nearly the idea of some young *débutante* in the part of Rosalind in *As You Like It*. The riding-dress was changed; the claret was called for, and the morning rose before the new friends parted.

## THE LATE MURDERS

*The Atlas.*

January 18, 1829.

PEOPLE, in speaking on this subject, seem to mistake in making the shockingness of the crime to depend on the value of human life. It is not that on which the question turns, but on the value which every human being sets on it. The horror which we conceive for the character of the murderer is nothing but the counterpart of that which everyone feels at the idea of being murdered. The love of

## THE LATE MURDERS

life is the strongest of all passions (for it includes every other), and the dread of losing it by a violent end, gives the severest shock to the frame. The poorest and most unhappy wretch that breathes, feels this as much as another; and he who is proof against the terror, the agony, the frantic struggle to save life when threatened, and all that there is of good and hope contained in it, is hardened against that which makes the strongest and most unanswerable appeal to our sympathy, and consequently without one spark of humanity left in his bosom. But to take away life in order to *sell* the dead body, to be hacked and hewed, and turned to use that way—as if the vile carcass were of more value than the living soul—is the highest aggravation of the cruelty and insult; for it is placing the contrast between life and death in the extremest point of view, and still contemplating it with brutish indifference or fiend-like avarice. It is the worst kind of cannibalism: for that may be hunger or savage rage, this is cold-blooded calculation. We may see by this example (in spite of what the *Utilitarians* tell us) how impossible it is to sanctify the means by the end; or to direct bad instruments and passions merely to the salutary objects we may have in view. We cannot say to vice, *Thus far shalt thou come and no farther!* It may be proper to have dead bodies to dissect, and necessary to get men to steal them; but from stealing they will proceed to *making* them as the shorter cut. Harden the feelings, debase the imagination—and you strike at the root of all morality and at the whole social system. There is no answering for the consequences. From the resurrection-man with his yellow fingers and torpid load, the transition is obvious to the assassin with blood-stained hands and his struggling victim. By familiarity (unredeemed by any other views but of his own sordid interest) he loses the repugnance due to death, and by degrees the reverence due to life. He looks at human bodies as containing so many bones and muscles, as so many moving anatomical preparations, and thinks that every pound of flesh, if it were *dead*, would be worth so much gold. This is a fearful train of ideas. The abstract utility does not purify these men's motives, as long as their imagination is a charnel-house, and they are accustomed to *stop the mouth* of all their own natural scruples by main force—they will find no difficulty after that in stopping any other mouth in the same way. Nobody would be, or would sit in company with, *Jack Ketch*: yet his is an indispensable calling. There is then something besides Utility. A story of a man eating a live cat, or a pound of candles, excites as much disgust and almost detestation as that of a murder. Yet in the eating case, at least, there is no harm done. But all our ordinary feelings and associations of liking and dislike, of pleasure and pain, undergo a

## THE LATE MURDERS

total revulsion, and we look at the performer in such revels as a prodigy of hardened insensibility. Nay more, if Burke or Hare had heard of a man eating a live cat or a pound of candles (unless he had been a Russian) they would have gone immediately to him to propose his becoming an associate with them; nor would they have lost their labour. So necessary is a certain set of natural or acquired instincts and prejudices, sympathies and antipathies, as the fountain out of which all morality and public good must flow! The man whose nerves are hard as iron, is a bad man; for you cannot harden him against himself as well as others, so as to make a mere machine of him.—It has been asked why the women belonging to the murderers were not afraid that the villains might (in their hideous *slang*) make ‘shots’ of them? But of this there was no danger. However devoid of common humanity and set against mere strangers, it does not follow that they had not strong passions and affections towards certain individuals. ‘Nelly, you are out of the scrape!’ This was the heroic side of this ghastly tragedy. Narrow the circle as we will, there must still be some *society* left—someone to act with us, someone to confide our villainies to, someone to approve them—or we should be stifled for want of company. Mrs. M’Dougall was perhaps the only woman in the world that would not regard her paramour as a monster; he would not, therefore, cut her throat, even for ten pounds; she was his good genius, that kept the *blue devils* from him. ‘No, not for Edinburgh!’—nor anything but to save himself from the gallows. If he had, he would have been even a greater scoundrel than he was: and thus it is that in the lowest depths of vice and immorality ‘a lower still opens to receive us,’ and that some sense of right and wrong, of good and evil, is left at the very bottom, and in the worst dregs of the human soul! The coolness of this wretched woman is wondered at, in going out after her acquittal to get gin, and in facing a mob of boys. If she did not mind the stillness of the bodies under the bed, she need not care for a little noise in the streets, when she was *once* safe. If she had possessed either feeling or remorse, she would not have endured the scenes she had gone through. Her floods of tears in the Court were dried up the instant she left it—she only wept at the thought of being hanged; though had she been convicted, and then continued her lamentations, she would have been caught at as a proselyte by her Catholic and spiritual guides, and anointed like a witch for Heaven, with twenty foul murders at her back, and not a particle of real contrition for anything but that she had not an opportunity to be concerned in as many more. It is singular what a power of abstraction there is in guilt! This woman proposed, if the informer would hold his tongue, ‘to get ten pound

## THE RULING PASSION

a-week by their present goings-on'—utterly dismissing all thought of the means by which this was to be done, or of the consequences to which it must lead, with the dead at her feet and the gallows at the door. No wonder people are blind to the fate of others, when they can shut their eyes to their own staring them in the face. She ought doubtless to have been left to the mercy of the mob. Criminals are too apt to lay their legal condemnation at the door of the law and the judges, and think it a conspiracy of the great and powerful against them: when they are torn in pieces by the enraged multitude, they have no longer that excuse left. Besides, popular vengeance, in extreme cases, is (as Lord Bacon expresses it) *a wild kind of justice*. If people see a legal execution, they think it a murder: if they carry the sentence into effect themselves, they think it justice.

## THE RULING PASSION

PICTOR LOQUITUR<sup>1</sup>

*The Atlas.*

January 18, 1829.

'OH! yes! that's the thing that makes Smith's book about Nollekens so run after—all those petty details and ridiculous peculiarities in it bring down a great artist to the common level, or sink him apparently below it; and this is what the world are always on the look-out after, and delight in when they can get it. That great baby, the world, however it may cry up and pretend to admire its idols, is just like the little girl who, after dressing up her doll in all its finery, and caressing it till she is tired, is not easy till she has pulled it to pieces again and reduced it to its original rags and wood. Nothing costs us so much as an acknowledgement of superiority, which is always forced from us; and nothing is such a relief as any pretence or opportunity afforded us for shaking off the uneasy obligation. This is the reason that we are so eager to keep all merit and all praise on some particular favourite, that so we may discharge all our obligations of this kind at once, and quit scores with fame and genius. When one of these idols tumbles in the mud, or an unlucky wight draws aside the drapery that conceals some infirmity, there is a general shout of exultation; this is indeed a moment of heart's-ease, a breathing-space and high holiday for our self-love. The world has a standing pique against genius. They are taught to believe in it, to look up to it, to bow down before it: a man of genius, a great artist, a great poet, a great philosopher, is held up as an abstraction of excellence, a miracle in nature, and a kind of god to their imagination: they are wheedled and brow-beat into

<sup>1</sup> *Viva voce* remarks communicated by a friend.

## THE RULING PASSION

this opinion from the time that they first lisp the name : how glad then are they to find that this wonderful being is a mere mortal, a poor creature, a starveling elf, as imperfect, indeed hardly so good, as themselves ! Instead of a vast general capacity, the only wonder is, how anyone with so little common sense or moral refinement could by dint of application, or from some peculiar bias, be able to excel in some one thing ; the artist is degraded into a mechanic, and genius translated into a trick. It thus seems that anyone could be a great artist who confined himself to that, or all whose faculties were narrowed by some odd freak of nature to a single point. It was that which made people so fond of asking Goldsmith to their tables—because he was like *an inspired idiot* ; yet he was a celebrated man, and they concluded that all celebrated men were like him—a species of non-descripts and *lusus naturæ*. For the same reason they did not invite Dr. Johnson : he afforded them no such triumph over the class by proxy—he carried his credentials about with him—and folly and fashion kept out of his way, lest their insignificance should be crushed by the weight of his words and of his thoughts. This feeling influenced me in the writing of my life of Sir Joshua—I wished to hold him up as a man of superior taste and refinement, and who would have made a most accomplished figure in any department : for such he was in reality. It is true, he had plenty of faults and foibles, and I could have let them out if I chose : the world were on the watch for them, and would have been delighted if I had made him out an ordinary character ; but I was determined to balk them, and to keep up a proper respect for the *class*. Smith has taken an opposite course, and this has made his book popular ; but he has carried it too far, and turned the tables on himself ; and instead of scouting the memory of Nollekens, the public affect to pity him, and have sent his biographer to *Coventry*. The world only want a butt—they care not who it is. Thus if two men are fighting in the street, and one knocks the other down, the mob set up a shout : they would have done just the same if it had been the other that was knocked down. There was a vulgar woman of quality at Plymouth, who used to invite guests, and amuse herself by making the servants play off practical jokes upon them. There was a Mr. Y——, whom she one day encouraged to heap his plate with sweetmeats and cream, and the jest was, while she was talking to him, for the footman slyly to slip his hand in, and convey away the plate ; but Mr. Y——, who was aware of what was going on, seized the plate just as the servant had got hold of it, and threw the whole contents of it behind him, right in the fellow's face. This did not offend the lady ; but she now laughed heartily at the confusion and ridiculous situation of her footman. This is the way



## RICHESSSE DE LA LANGUE

of the world—all they want is someone (no matter who) to turn the laugh from themselves. This was the fault of Mr. Leigh Hunt's book about Lord Byron (though I differ with him entirely and adore Lord Byron myself): but to satisfy the rabble, he should have given him the *coup-de-grâce*—he offended by nine disclosures, and from false delicacy omitted the tenth, which would have justified the other nine in common opinion. As to the rest, he might have dug up Lord Byron's bones, and hung him in chains as a felon and scarecrow, for anything his fondest admirers cared about it. There was an old gentleman here the other day who was regretting the publication of the book about Nollekens; but comforted himself that it would defeat itself, and that no one would read it, it was so spiteful. I went up to him and said, "Do you think so? why, that is the very reason that everyone will read it." He answered, very mildly, he was sorry I thought so, and hoped that the world was better. "Why," I said, "do you then imagine yourself free from that vice? Suppose you were to be told a story of a fine lady stepping on a tottering plank over a dirty puddle, and that of a sudden her foot slipped and down she came—why there you laugh at the very idea before I have finished my story, and so will the world, you may depend upon it, be delighted at any mischief that they think is going on."

## RICHESSSE DE LA LANGUE

*The Atlas.*

*January 25, 1829.*

How should one convey by a single word an expression of face which having arisen from some strong passion, uneasiness or emotion, is converted into an habitual character, and remains without any immediate object to excite it? In the English language there are above thirty ways of doing this, or else approaching to, and hovering round the point. As for instance, we may express this look by the following epithets, more or less pointedly, and with various inflections of meaning attached to them:—*wild, scared, startled, baggard, harassed, hunted, nervous, agitated, apprehensive, terrified, dismayed, abstracted, stunned, panick-struck, odd, strange, wayward, flighty, uncouth, unaccountable, eccentric, embarrassed, unsettled, uneasy, overconscious, morbid, careworn, blighted, scare-crow, bang-dog, ghastly, wilful, dogged, staring, fierce, &c.* All these come tolerably near the mark, and differ from each other; yet none of them is the very word that is wanted to express the thing in question, though we have no doubt there is such a word in the English language, and that it might be suggested by some one who has a greater command of its resources. The above

## POPE BENEDICT

remarks may serve to guard the student of English, whether a foreigner or merely a stranger to his native tongue, against unmeaning *synonymes* or monotonous commonplace.

## POPE BENEDICT

*The Atlas.*

February 1, 1829.

THIS amiable pontiff having to receive three English gentlemen who showed certain signs of repugnance to the ceremony of introduction, adroitly turned it off by saying, 'I know very well what your opinions are, and that you have no faith in our spiritual privileges; but I suppose you will have no objection to receive a blessing from an old man!' When a nobleman in the time of George I. was very roundly taken to task on his return from Rome for not having tried to convert the Pope, he made answer that 'he might have done so, but that he was not aware that he had anything better to offer him, if he had succeeded.' A Mrs. Millar, who published a book of travels a few years ago, boasts that at some grand ceremony at the *Capella Sistina*, she stood up, while all the other persons present knelt, showing by her looks her contempt for the mummerly around her. And this in Rome, where no look from any individual you meet, high or low, priest or layman, man or woman, ever reminds you that you are a heretic or a foreigner, and where the air is purified by deep policy and long refinement from impertinence! We have seen a Roman cardinal return the bow of a galley-slave (the red stockings making a leg to the yellow!)—an English duke bows to a whole street in passing, but does not notice the low obeisance of the beggar who sweeps the crossing. The English are a nation of martyrs to rudeness and ill-manners when they get abroad: there is a sort of receipt for this in the new farce of the *Sublime and Beautiful*, where Madame Vestris, as the representative of a free-born Englishwoman, claps the Sultan on the back like a Jack-tar, and sends her compliments to the chief Mufti to beg a dozen of Imperial tokay! If there is no curing this insolent and unreflecting egotism under some hundreds of years, at least it ought not to be encouraged for a single moment.

## BUTTS OF DIFFERENT SORTS

*The Atlas.*

February 8, 1829.

THESE may be divided into the following classes: butts of admiration; butts of impertinence; and lastly, butts of charity. The secret of them all is pretty much the same. The human imagination, like water, follows wherever it can find an opening for its restless and

## BUTTS OF DIFFERENT SORTS

undistinguishing activity: it only requires an example to be set, and the channel once worn, there is no want of a supply of folly, malice, pity, or any other feeling, to keep it full to the brim. Thus, let a man admire himself, and he will infallibly find plenty of simpletons to admire him. The group around him will attract others, till there is a mob; and those at the farthest extremity of it, who can neither hear, see, nor understand a word of the matter, will not shout the less loud for that, nor be the less delighted. But let an ill-natured or hired critic throw a handful of mud at the darling of the hour, and it is well if the applauding crowd do not join in pelting him, and end with rolling their idol in the kennel. His friends meantime sneak off, and lend a helping and cordial hand at restoring the balance of opinion. If it be the fashion to cry up, the world cry up; if it be the fashion to run down, they vilify, insult, and belie on the faith of others, with as little mercy, as little reason, and with somewhat more satisfaction to themselves. What merit has not been tarnished, what quackery has not been screened, by this sort of cant and collusion? Mr. Burke has been severely censured for saying that learning, deprived of extraneous support, was liable to be trodden down and trampled 'under the hoofs of *the* swinish multitude.' But his words are '*a* swinish multitude'; and this slight alteration seems to relieve the passage of its political odium, and to leave only the moral truth. The majority, compose them how you will, are a herd, and not a very nice one. To them the idol or bugbear is the same:—it is something to fill up the vacant thought, and to convince them of the solidity and importance of their own opinion, when it is the babbling repetition of the ignorance and noise of others. Again, a modest man is the natural butt of impertinence. People receive just so much respect from the vulgar as they expect from them. Hold up your head, stretch out your leg, adjust your cravat, and leer in the glass of your self-opinion, and you will be met with corresponding gravity and due decorum. But if you hang down your head, and leave it to others to assign your *quantum meruit*, they will pull you by the nose. It is wonderful the quantity of petulance and wanton insolence there is in mankind, if they find an object they think they can exercise it upon with impunity. There are only two parts in the interlude of life, the bully and the coward—whoever has the spirit to assume the one, will find his neighbour sitting down quietly under the other: nay, we often find the same person playing both characters, *Scrub* or the *Captain*, according to the company in which he is, and the stage on which he acts. There is a sort of *second-hand* impertinence, of which certain individuals are made the butt, as a foil to some candidate for precedence that is set up over their heads. Thus there

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are many who, having no pretensions of their own, go round the circle of their acquaintance to collect a tax of admiration, and exact due homage to some favourite, to whom as they bow themselves, they expect you to bow also. Having paid the forfeit of their own self-love, they think it strange that anyone else should be refractory, and hold out against their judgment and their favourite's wit. This egotism and impertinence by proxy is doubly offensive, both in its pertness and servility. A critic of this stamp will seriously ask a brother-author who is boasting of some work of his, 'But you don't think it equal to *So-and-So's*?' naming his literary hero: he will show you a puff of his friend, but conceal from you one of yourself, lest you should grow vain and fancy yourself something: if his model of perfection should have a picce damned, it is the duty of everyone else to withdraw from the stage. It is *lèse-majesté* by the laws of Parnassus to hint a fault or a doubt of exclusive supremacy. The truth is, that these persons having no hope of attaining much distinction themselves, will at least make choice of a leader, and reduce all others to the rank of train-bearers. There is another species of impertinence, which may be termed *radical impertinence*. By Heavens! a radical reformer is no more thought of by his readers than if he were a man of straw. After having taught the rabble to despise kings, priests, and nobles, the philosopher expects them to look up to him as an oracle. The very shop-boys and printers'-devils laugh in his face. This same liberty and equality opens the very flood-gates of impertinence; and what at first was wisdom and truth, soon degenerates into ribaldry and vulgarity.

Lastly, there are butts of charity, common sewers for voluntary donations; worthy people who are patentees of pauperism, and have a mortgage on the public purse. A hundred-pound subscription is nothing to them, they soon want another hundred; and when that is exhausted, they call for a third, and so on to the ten thousandth. It is a precedent to give, it passes into the currency of a proverb. What is the meaning of this defluction of disinterested benevolence? First, it is for some affair of notoriety, which reflects notoriety on the patrons. Then it has become a habit, and they are bound to make good their first election. Thirdly, it has done no good, and that clenches the matter. If they are out of pocket, nobody is the better for their loss. Their *protégé* is still an object of charity, a proof of their virtue, a dependent on their bounty, a pensioner on their pity. If he had made himself comfortable with his hundreds, they would have cut him long before, and said, 'Oh, ho! he can do without us—what presumption!' Or if with the thousands he had sported a town and country house, a curricule, and a fair friend, there would

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have been something to show for their money, and the town would have rung with the extravagance and scandal. But he has *muddled* it away; and envy and friendship are satisfied. If a man has a hole in his purse, the public will pour money into it, like water into a sieve: there is still a craving for more, and charity, like nature, abhors a *vacuum*. Next to putting it into the Bank, men like to squander their superfluous wealth on those to whom it is sure of doing the least possible good. The grand art is to lay you under an obligation, without doing you a service.—*Mærens fecit.*

## BURKE AND THE EDINBURGH PHRENOLOGISTS

*The Atlas.*

February 15, 1829.

THESE northern wits and horoscopers (to whom craniology serves as a profound modern substitute for their favourite system of *second-sight*, lost in the mists of their native mountains) are as eager to get hold of a murderer's skull to practise their theory upon, as sharks to devour a dead body that has been flung overboard, or crows to flock about a sheep that has just fallen down in a fit, and peck out its eyes. They generally find a *mare's nest*, it is true: but the disappointment only adds to their curiosity; and not finding the first skull answer to their prognostics, they are more intent than ever on the next windfall from the gallows, not to wean them from, but to confirm them in, their fantastic follies. The atrocious criminals (of whom they think to take an ungenerous advantage after they are dead, and reap a rich harvest of craniological facts from their bare defenceless skulls) seem to make a point of giving the lie to the quackery of their critics and commentators—they turn out 'honourable murderers,' milk-sop characters, and present not only a meek and amiable aspect to the crowd of gazers in Court, but on the closest inspection and nicest admeasurement in the dissecting-room, are found to have the organ of *benevolence* largely developed, and 'peace on earth, and goodwill to man,' written in capitals at the back of their heads. If they cannot cheat the hangman of his fee, they cheat Mr. Combe and his associates of their demonstration, but not of their conclusion. No: these gentlemen are not to be deceived by appearances; they will not suffer a *hoax* to be put upon the science, nor hear of the grand arcanum being lost for a total deficiency of proof. Faith is the evidence of things unseen; nor is the motto, '*Credo quia impossibile est,*' confined to religious enthusiasts. What astrologer ever gave up his predictions because the stars did not know their own minds? What alchemist ever had his belief in the *elixir vitæ* and the *aurum potabile* shaken by

## EDINBURGH PHRENOLOGISTS

finding nothing but lead at the bottom of his crucible? What animal-magnetist ever gave up his hallucinations in compliment to his senses? And shall the craniologist, the sublimest of all, fail in a due confidence in his art, when it is most needed? Is the organ of credulity blotted from the map of the human understanding? or where should it take refuge but in the most modern quackery and in the *Modern Athens*? A certain writer has said that '*all impediments in fancy's course are motives of more fancy.*' So the stumbling-blocks in the way of idle theories only help on the conviction and zeal of their partizans by irritating the self-conceit and spirit of dogmatism, in which all idle theories have their root. The origin of all science is in the *desire to know causes*; and the origin of all false science and imposture is in the desire to accept false causes rather than none; or, which is the same thing, in the unwillingness to acknowledge our own ignorance. We want to translate unknown causes into known ones; and the visionary and mountebank takes advantage of this impatience in the human mind of the obscure and doubtful, to bring forward boldly any gross and visible sign (formerly it was words, now it is some material object), and tell his hearers: 'This is what you are in search of; you now see and feel the truth, and need give yourself no further trouble about the mysteries of nature or the imperfection of your own faculties.' The whole is an impudent *quid pro quo*, on the part of the pompous projector. It is just like Sterne's supposing that wit and judgment are respectively the two brass knobs on his great armchair. What he did in jest, and *en passant*, these people do in earnest, and *bore* you to death with it. The nature and faculties of the human mind are a profound mystery, an inextricable labyrinth, which the philosopher labours in vain to penetrate, and after a few imperfect guesses retires in despair: the quack settles it all in a minute—'Look at this bump on the head, it is one faculty; at the bump next to it, it is another; the intellectual faculties are in front of the head, the moral or immoral propensities behind. You surely know the back of the head from the forehead; you can put your finger at pleasure on any bump or faculty you choose; can ascertain the length, breadth, and depth of it. *Io pæan!* What farther doubt remains on the subject? Away then with mysticism and metaphysics.' So Mr. Owen (an empiric of another description) got wood-cuts of his projected villages stuck at the top of the *Times* newspaper, and from that instant thought every reader had ocular demonstrations of the truth of his system: the wood-cuts were facts, visible and tangible; but the villages were in the air—the system as much in the clouds as ever. The bumps on the head are in like manner facts, objects of sense, and so forth; that they are the organs

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of the mind or in any way intelligibly connected with them is a problem, and a problem that has never been proved, but the contrary whenever opportunity served. The craniologist gets hold of a murderer; that is a case in point; now will the science triumph over maligners: the organ of murder will be prominent as the Calton Hill; those of benevolence and religion sunk low like the Grass-market. Does it appear so in the dead body, in Mr. Combe's cast, or Mr. Joseph's bust? Not in the least, any more than if the science had never existed. What then? Is the craniologist *floored* by this staggering blow to his creed? No: but the criminal was laid on his back as soon as he was taken down, and this has made a mere chance-medley of all the organs and of all the phenomena *by the rushing of blood to the head*. Haggerty gave the science strangely the slip. Mac-kinnon might have sat for a female saint. Now Burke is equally refractory and unamenable to the diagrams and scholia of the sect. Here follows the inventory of his organs, announced with all due pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious craniology in a late Edinburgh Journal.

### RELATIVE PROPORTIONS.

Amativeness, very large.	Weight, full.
Philoprogenitiveness, full.	Colour, full.
Concentrativeness, deficient.	Locality, full.
Adhesiveness, full.	Order, full.
Combativeness, large.	Time, deficient.
Destructiveness, very large.	Cautiousness, rather large.
Constructiveness, moderate.	Benevolence, large.
Acquisitiveness, large.	Veneration, large.
Secretiveness, large.	Hope, small.
Self-esteem, rather large.	Ideality, small.
Love of approbation, rather large.	Conscientiousness, rather large.
Firmness, large.	Number, full.
Individualities—	Tune, moderate.
Upper, moderate.	Language, full.
Lower, full.	Comparison, full.
Form, full.	Causality, rather large.
Size, full.	Wit, deficient.
	Imitation, full.

So much for the text; now for the gloss.

'On the whole, it will be seen from the preceding statement that the organs of the moral sentiments are more developed than was to have been expected from what we *at present* know of the character of

## EDINBURGH PHRENOLOGISTS

Burke. The intellectual organs are also perhaps fully large. Having understood that Mr. Combe was to make some remarks upon this subject in his lecture on Thursday, we attended at the Clyde Street Hall. Mr. Combe began by regretting that it was not in his power to exhibit the cast of Burke, as he had promised: two had been taken, one by Mr. Joseph<sup>1</sup> and another by Mr. O'Neill; but the former was not yet ready to be taken from the mould, and the latter having been taken over the hair, was *less adapted* for their purpose. He had himself seen it for a short time; but was not yet able to remark upon it. He hoped, however, to have it in his power to present a cast at his next lecture. In the meantime, he had been informed by an able Phrenologist, that the development corresponded in every particular with the dispositions manifested by Burke.' [*That is, the organ of benevolence corresponded with his engaging smile to little children whom he wished to decoy into his den, and his organ of veneration with his religious exercises on the scaffold.*] 'He (Mr. Combe) said that the character of this individual—viz. Burke—in consequence of his late atrocities, was somewhat obscured from the public eye; and that it should be remembered that he had, during a considerable portion of his life, refrained from crime, *having been for some time in the Donegal militia, and not having committed murder till the thirty-sixth year of his age.* No former theory of philosophy could explain the anomaly of these debasing faculties having remained so long inactive, excepting Phrenology.'

*Oh Bocconi!* Surely, your *wiseacre* is your only fool. After this, for the *modern Athens* we must read the modern Gotham. Nothing but Scotch sermons and Scotch lectures could bring a man to this pass of imposing on himself by grave phrases. So then, if a man has forty murders on his head, he is to be screened by the Phrenological Society of Edinburgh, if his skull throws them out in their ridiculous lucubrations. Burke's late atrocities, instead of revealing his secret propensities, 'somewhat obscured his true character for piety and benevolence,' as marked by the proper organs, though it is at the same time stated that nothing but Phrenology can account for his destructive propensities having remained so long inactive, though they were so strong as to have worn through the skull and 'almost rendered it diaphanous.' We did not know before that the organ of murder did not arrive at puberty till the thirty-sixth year, or that a man took a furlough from his character by going into the Donegal militia. That Burke was not an abstract personification of a murderer is true; but that he approached this character as nearly as human

<sup>1</sup> This Mr. Joseph (*absit moidia*) was not properly appreciated in London; but in the modern Athens, he passes for a second Phidias.—See the *Scotsman*.



## COMMON FAME

infirmity would permit—that is, was one of the most hardened villains on record, with as rooted a capacity for evil and as little disposition to good in his nature as possible—is also clear; and if there was any truth in the Gall and Spurzheim doctrine, this ought to have appeared in the development of the pretended organs—particularly as these are supposed to act mechanically and irresistibly, nor borrow leave of circumstances to unfold themselves. If the proportion of the organs had corresponded with Burke's actions, we should have had no salvo for his character, or certificate of his behaviour in the Donegal militia, as a set-off to his late atrocities: but having a respectable-looking skull, round and smooth, and a full and handsome complement of the moral and intellectual faculties of benevolence, veneration, ideality, caution, &c. our craniologists do not know what to make of him, shuffle and try to gain time; and sixteen murders running, committed in cold blood and with the most inhuman aggravations, only 'obscure his character from the public eye,' but cannot dazzle the lynxes of craniology. This is sad *catch-penny*, and too much even for the meridian of Auld Reekie.

## COMMON FAME

*The Atlas.*

February 22, 1829.

THERE is not a more common, nor a more generally accredited story than the one told of Goldsmith, who being in some town in Holland with the Miss Hornecks and their mother, the young ladies attracted so much admiration by their extreme beauty, that the crowd gathered round the balcony of the inn where they stopped and insisted upon seeing them. On this Goldsmith is said to have been so mortified, that he turned sullenly away and went back into the room, observing, 'There are places where I also am admired.' As this anecdote tends to confirm the *cant* notions of the envy and vanity of authors, no doubt is ever entertained of it. The truth is, that Goldsmith was so far from being mortified, that he was delighted with the distinction paid to his fair young friends, and came up to them in the most good-humoured way and with an ironical smile, saying, as it were to point the fealty of the crowd, 'Well, but remember there are places where I too am admired!' This explanation was given not long ago, by one of the parties, who still survives the friend and poet, but has not outlived *his* fame nor her own beauty! As another instance of the facility with which this sort of prejudice is taken up and propagated, whenever it serves as a foil to shining abilities and accomplishments, we might mention the trite tradition of George Selwin, who is supposed to have been a regular attendant at Tyburn, and whose name is almost coupled

## LORD NORTH

with the executioner's. '*C'est un amateur*,' was the excuse said to have been made for him when he had improperly thrust himself into a worshipful circle of *bourreaux* somewhere in France. If his own word is to be taken, there is no foundation for this *trait* in his character. For once being on a visit at Mr. Cambridge's house at Richmond, and the story of the *amateur Jack Ketch* being alluded to in Lord North's hearing, who said, 'Aye, I'm sorry such a strange taste should be attributed to my friend George,' the latter replied, 'My Lord, I never was at an execution in my life.' This anecdote, if true, is worth preserving, to show how odd stories get about, though it is not to be found in the *Life of Mr. Cambridge*, published a few years back. That work did not answer to the expectation entertained of it, both from the character of the very elegant scholar who was the subject of it, and the company that met at his house. These consisted of men of wit, of learning, and of rank; but there is seldom any mention made, except of the last, and only in their capacity of lords. One lord comes in, and says nothing; a second comes in, and says nothing; a third does the same. All these nothings are good for nothing, except as they fall from the lips of the right honourable speakers. A *House of Lords* is no doubt a very fine thing; but a *Book of Lords* is a dull business, and no better than a House of Cards.

## LORD NORTH

*The Atlas.*

March 1, 1829.

His Toryism, his wit, and his love of sleep, are well known. In his latter years he was blind, and was generally accompanied by his daughter, who acted both as his guide and prompter. If anything remarkable was said in his fits of absence, she roused her father, who, putting on the courtier, and disclaiming the excuses of the last speaker for not repeating what had just fallen from him, saying, 'I am sure that voice could tell a story very well,' listened, applauded, and fell asleep again: or told one of his own, or made some droll remark, and then dropt off like an infant. In the time of the American war, there was a Mr. Hartley in Opposition, son of the celebrated David Hartley; we say *celebrated*—that is, *ut lucus a non lucendo*—for the fame of this great metaphysician is, like that of so many others, of the subterranean class, 'hushed in the hollow mine of earth'; or you trace him, like the mole, only by the quantity of matter he has thrown up, and which Scotch professors carry off in lofty succession, to manure their dry brains and barren quartos with. The son, who was as prosing, though not so profound, as the father, figured in Parliament, as we have said, towards the close of the American war, and made a periodical attack

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on the Ministry once a year on the distresses and decline of trade. He took up the matter *ab ovo*, and brought it down, with due pomp and emphasis, to the date at which he spoke. Lord North, who liked the short and sweet in oratory, took no interest in the lengthened declamations of the honourable member, which made dreadful inroads in the hours which he dedicated to golden slumbers on the Treasury-bench. Accordingly, he prepared himself for one of these annual homilies, by getting a friend to sit near him, who was to take notice of what was said, and wake him up in time to answer. The Whig orator had passed through the period of the Druids, had carried our commerce triumphantly through the Saxon heptarchy, and was approaching our own time 'after the manner which men call *tedious*,' when Lord North received the expected jog from his friend, who said, 'You must wake up, he is drawing to a close.' 'Why, whereabouts is he?' 'He has got to the age of Queen Elizabeth.' 'Oh, let me sleep *another century*,' was the answer; and his head nodded smiling on his bosom again. Once when Burke was speaking, and had given a false quantity to the word *magister*, in some quotation he was making, it shot across Lord North's ear, who was asleep; and starting up, he corrected Burke's mistake in a sharp, shrill voice, who sat down in great confusion without finishing his speech. The scholars of Trinity College are said not to be sure of their Latin pronunciation; and Burke seeing some *sixth-form boys* from Eton before him at Hastings's trial, could not conceal his vexation, and swore 'he would sooner see the Devil.' What trifles disturb and occupy the greatest minds! Soon after Dr. Johnson's death, his Latin poems had been collected together and were lying in a bookseller's shop; when an Eton boy (we believe a son of Dunning's) coming in and turning to one of the poems, threw down the volume in evident disgust. Dr. Burney, who was present, ran and took it up, and referring to the place, found that the great critic and moralist had been guilty of a false quantity. Learning was pleased at the discovery. Had Johnson known it, he would have growled hoarse dissatisfaction in his grave, and thought his lucubrations in the *Rambler*, his talk at the Mitre, and his dinners at Sir Joshua's, vain!

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*The Atlas.*

March 1, 1829.

A PRACTICE has of late crept into the theatres which we wish to take exception at. We are not particularly captious or severe in point of morals—not that we are indifferent, but that we feel the uselessness of censure or complaint where the passions are concerned; but something

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may be done, we think, with regard to mere manners and appearances. We coincide pretty much in the sentiment which we overheard expressed by a venerable member of the nightly watch, who reprimanded some young women who were making a great noise at a late hour, saying, 'I would not be hard upon you, ladies; but I like decorum.' For a watchman, the distinction was not inappropriate, nor the style inelegant. The Lord Chancellor himself could hardly pronounce a fairer judgment in a case of equity, nor deliver it in better terms. The march of intellect certainly descends downwards; and of late it seems to have taken it in its head to ascend too. The guardian of the night and proclaimer of the hours hit the nail on the head in the sentiment above hazarded; the difficulty would be in enforcing it; for we are convinced that there could not be a more effectual way of clearing the streets of night-walkers, than by preventing them from getting drunk, making a disturbance, and insulting the passengers. Upon such hard conditions as *decorum* would lay upon them, few of these votaries of pleasure would turn out for love or money. What we were going to remark was this—we prudently decline the task of saying anything against the gaudy display and gay fascination of our saloons and lobbies; the finery, the glare, the dress or undress, the naked charm, the added ornament; all this is placed beyond our reach, or protected by a battery of smiles and glances, of youth and beauty, against which words were importunate and vain; but though we let the foolish young creature pass, tricked out in a remnant of silks and satins, we must object strongly and wholly to the bundle of old clothes that follows her. You see stuck up against every post or pillar on a certain fashionable landing-place, two or three Jew-women in long duffle-cloaks, rusty black bonnets, and coloured handkerchiefs, looking like premature Sybils or Witches of Endor, and wonder who they are, and how the d——l they got there. They are waiting at the heels of some black-eyed, cherry-checked doll, whom they have supplied with finery for the evening, and ready to pounce upon her, tear it off her back, and turn her naked into the street, if she have not made a market of herself and the goods, and delivered the *proceeds* without delay or reserve to the mercenary slop-seller. A row probably breaks out anon, and the lobby rings with screams, sobs, ribaldry, and curses; or if all goes on well, and the clothes, the curls, and bracelets, are making a *per centage*, these official personages get snug into one of the boxes and stand three in a row before you (like a group of *gouls* about a new-made grave) in spite of hints or entreaty. People in that class have no fear but of being *carted*:—they are sunk so low in opinion that they cannot sink lower, and are therefore absolutely hard of hearing on the score of propriety. Nay, they are pleased to put anyone out of temper

## ODDS AND ENDS

or excite disapprobation, for it seems as if you expected something better from them. This is too much. Though the play-house may serve other uses neither to be spoken of nor gainsaid, yet we submit that its first and most undeniable use is that of a play-house. If indeed you are hindered from seeing the play by a head of fine auburn hair with jewels in it, or a well-turned neck or ivory shoulders, there's some excuse for it; or if on an insinuation of a more *piano* tone in some fair speaker, a handsome countenance turns round laughing and good-humoured, the critical bile is neutralized: but to be prevented by a set of frowsy, dirty, foul-mouthed crones from seeing Archer make love to Dorinda in the *Beaux Stratagem*, or hearing Miss Byfield sing the air of 'Cease your funning' in the *Beggar's Opera*, this, we say again, is too much—a nuisance without one palliating circumstance to redeem it. Even with an eye to business, these sharp-set brokers in frail beauty and cast finery had better keep their distance, and act only as sleeping-partners in the concern. If 'a maid be vendible,' the being reminded of it does not mend her market. If her clothes are not her own, this does not add to the attraction. If she must be upbraided and ill-used for not bringing home a certain sum, this is a mode of persuasion not owned by the 'laughter-loving Venus.' These scare-crow representatives of Monmouth Street and Rag-fair make very bad maids-of-honour to the Loves and Graces—they frighten away gallants instead of securing them. They are death's-heads suspended over the smile of beauty, a *memento mori* to youthful blood and super-annuated folly. If their young friends and *protégées* present a dazzling frontispiece to the imagination, their squalid attendants point with forked fingers to the vista of the tread-mill and spunging-house. They should at least be driven out of the Temple of the Muses, and would not be tolerated for a moment, except in this shop-keeping and slop-selling country.

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*The Atlas.*

March 1, 1829.

FUSELI used to say, that people were willing to be thought old to have seen Garrick. He also said that Mr. Kean, in the third act of *Othello*, rose to a level with the genius of the author. For ourselves, we would give fifty pounds to see Garrick, and another fifty to see Mrs. Abington. We do not count our riches—we *have* seen Mrs. Siddons, Mrs. Jordan, and Madame Pasta. On the score of low comedy, Mrs. Jordan left us nothing to desire in voice, face, manner; but there has been no perfect actress in the genteel walk of comedy in our recollection, nor, we believe, since Mrs. Abington, in whose praise all voices concur,

## POETRY

some of them tremulous at once with age and with enthusiasm. Miss Farren, whom we just remember going off the stage, had the form of fashion, without the spirit and effect : she was in that class but a feeble and lifeless specimen. Mademoiselle Mars is the best we have seen ; but she does not fill up the idea in our minds of the infinite store of graces, blandishments, and nameless witcheries that belong to that description of character—such as we read, such as we dream of. She is the obtruncated statue of comedy ; but without the drapery, the air, the flutter about it. Some of the little French actresses have more of the winning way, the playful attraction ; but then they *are* little, and by no means fit to *top* the parts of a Millamant or an Angelica.

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*The Atlas.*

*March 8, 1829.*

As there are two kinds of rhyme, one that is rhyme to the ear, and another to the eye only ; so there may be said to be two kinds of poetry, one that is a description of objects to those who have never seen or but slightly studied them ; the other is a description of objects addressed to those who have seen and are intimately acquainted with them, and expressing the feeling which is the result of such knowledge. It is needless to add that the first kind of poetry is comparatively superficial and commonplace ; the last profound, lofty, nay often divine. Take an example (one out of a thousand) from Shakespeare. In enumerating the wished-for contents of her basket of flowers, Perdita in the *Winter's Tale* mentions among others——

‘ Daffodils

That come before the swallow dares, and take  
The winds of March with beauty ; violets dim,  
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes  
Or Cytherea's breath ; pale primroses  
That die unmarried ere they can behold  
Bright Phœbus in his strength, a malady  
Most incident to maids.’

This passage which knocks down John Bull with its perfumed and melting softness, and savours of ‘ that fine madness which our first poets had,’ is a mystery, an *untranslatable* language, to all France : Racine could not have conceived what it was about—the stupidest Englishmen feels a certain pride and pleasure in it. What a privilege (if that were all) to be born on this the cloudy and poetical side of the Channel ! We may in part clear up this contradiction in tastes by the clue above given. The French are more apt at taking the patterns of their ideas from words ; we, who are slower and heavier, are obliged

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to look closer at things before we can pronounce upon them at all, which in the end perhaps opens a larger field both of observation and fancy. Thus the phrase 'violets *dim*,' to those who have never seen the object, or who, having paid no attention to it, refer to the description for their notion of it, seems to convey a slur rather than a compliment, dimness being no beauty in itself; so this part of the story would not have been ventured upon in French or tinsel poetry. But to those who have seen, and been as it were enamoured of the little hedge-row candidate for applause, looking at it again and again (as misers contemplate their gold—as fine ladies hang over their jewels), till its image has sunk into the soul, what other word is there that (far from putting the reader out of conceit with it) so well recalls its deep purple glow, its retired modesty, its sullen, conscious beauty? Those who have not seen the flower cannot form an idea of its character, nor understand the line without it. Its aspect is dull, obtuse, faint, absorbed; but at the same time soft, luxurious, proud, and full of meaning. People who look at nature without being sensible to these distinctions and contrarieties of feeling, had better (instead of the flower) look only at the label on the stalk. Connoisseurs in French wines pretend to know all these depths and refinements of taste, though connoisseurs in French poetry pretend to know them not. To return to our text—

' Violets dim,  
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes  
Or Cytherea's breath.'

How *bizarre*! cries one hypercritic. What far-fetched metaphors! exclaims another. We shall not dwell on the allusion to 'Cytherea's breath,' it is obvious enough: but how can the violet's smell be said to be 'sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes?' Oh! honeyed words, how ill understood! And is there no true and rooted analogy between our different sensations, as well as a positive and literal identity? Is there not a sugared, melting, half-sleepy look in some eyelids, like the luscious, languid smell of flowers? How otherwise express that air of scorn and tenderness which breathes from them? Is there not a balmy dew upon them which one would kiss off? Speak, ye lovers! if any such remain in these degenerate days to take the part of genuine poetry against cold, barren criticism; for poetry is nothing but an intellectual love—Nature is the poet's mistress, and the heart in his case lends words and harmonious utterance to the tongue.—Again, how full of truth and pity is the turn which is given to the description of the pale and faded primrose, watching for the sun's approach as for the torch of Hymen! Milton

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has imitated this not so well in 'cowslips wan that hang the pensive head.' Cowslips are of a gold colour, rather than wan. In speaking of the daffodils, it seems as if our poet had been struck with these 'lowly children of the ground' on their first appearance, and seeing what bright and unexpected guests they were at that cold, comfortless season, wondered how 'they came before the swallow (the harbinger of summer) dared,' and being the only lovely thing in nature, fancied the winds of March were taken with them, and tamed their fury at the sight. No one but a poet who has spent his youth in the company of nature could so describe it, as no reader who has not experienced the same elementary sensations, their combinations and contrasts, can properly enter into it when so described. The finest poetry, then, is not a paradox nor a trite paraphrase; but a bold and happy enunciation of truths and feelings deeply implanted in the mind—Apollo, the god of poetry and day, evolving the thoughts of the breast, as he does the seed from the frozen earth, or enables the flower to burst its folds. Poetry is, indeed, a fanciful structure; but a fanciful structure raised on the groundwork of the strongest and most intimate associations of our ideas: otherwise, it is good for nothing, *vox et preterea nihil*. A literal description goes for nothing in poetry, a pure fiction is of as little worth; but it is the extreme beauty and power of an impression with all its accompaniments, or the very intensity and truth of feeling, that pushes the poet over the verge of matter-of-fact, and justifies him in resorting to the licence of fiction to express what without his 'winged words' must have remained for ever untold. Thus the feeling of the contrast between the roughness and bleakness of the winds of March and the tenderness and beauty of the flowers of spring is already in the reader's mind, if he be an observer of nature: the poet, to show the utmost extent and conceivable effect of this contrast, *feigns* that the winds themselves are sensible of it and smit with the beauty on which they commit such rude assaults. Lord Byron, whose imagination was not of this compound character, and more wilful than natural, produced splendid exaggerations. Mr. Shelley, who felt the want of originality without the power to supply it, distorted every thing from what it was, and his pen produced only abortions. The one would say that the sun was a 'ball of dazzling fire'; the other, not knowing what to say, but determined 'to elevate and surprize,' would swear that it was *black*. This latter class of poetry may be denominated the *Apocalyptic*.



# ENGLISH GRAMMAR

## ENGLISH GRAMMAR

*The Atlas.*

March 15, 1829.

THIS is one of those subjects on which the human understanding has played the fool, almost as egregiously, though with less dire consequences, than on many others; or rather one on which it has not chosen to exert itself at all, being hoodwinked and led blindfold by mere precedent and authority. Scholars who have made and taught from English grammars were previously and systematically initiated in the Greek and Latin tongues, so that they have, without deigning to notice the difference, taken the rules of the latter and applied them indiscriminately and dogmatically to the former. As well might they pretend that there is a *dual number* in the Latin language because there is one in the Greek.

The *Definitions* alone are able to corrupt a whole generation of ingenuous youth. They seem calculated for no other purpose than to *mystify* and *stultify* the understanding, and to inoculate it betimes with a due portion of credulity and verbal sophistry. After repeating them by rote, to maintain that two and two makes five is easy, and a thing of course. What appears most extraordinary is that notwithstanding the complete exposure of their fallacy and nonsense by Horne Tooke and others, the same system and method of instruction should be persisted in; and that grammar succeeds grammar and edition edition, re-echoing the same point-blank contradictions and shallow terms. Establishments and endowments of learning (which subsist on a 'foregone conclusion') may have something to do with it; independently of which, and for each person's individual solace, the more senseless the absurdity and the longer kept up, the more reluctant does the mind seem to part with it, whether in the greatest things or mere trifles and technicalities; for in the latter, as the retracting an error could produce no startling sensation, and be accompanied with no redeeming enthusiasm, its detection must be a pure loss and pitiful mortification. One might suppose, that out of so many persons as have their attention directed to this subject, some few would find out their mistake and protest against the common practice; but the greater the number of professional labourers in the vineyard, who seek not truth but a livelihood, and can *pay with words* more currently than with things, the less chance must there be of this, since the majority will always set their faces against it, and insist upon the old *Mumpsimus* in preference to the new *Sumpsimus*. A schoolmaster who should go so far out of his way as to take the *Diversions of Purley* for a text-book, would be regarded by his brethren of the rod as 'a man of Ind,' and would soon have the dogs of the village bark at him. It is said

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without blushing, by both masters and ushers who do not chuse to be 'wise above what is written,' that a noun is the name of a *thing*, i.e. substance, as if *love*, *honour*, *colour*, were the names of substances. An adjective is defined to be the name of a quality; and yet in the expressions, a *gold* snuff-box, a *wooden* spoon, an *iron* chest, &c. the words *gold*, *wooden*, *iron*, are allowed by all these profound writers, grammarians, and logicians, to be essentially adjectives. A verb is likewise defined to be a word denoting *being*, *action*, or *suffering*; and yet the words *being*, *action*, *suffering* (or passion), are all substantives; so that these words cannot be supposed to have any reference to the things whose names they bear, if it be the peculiar and sole office of the verb to denote them. If a system were made in burlesque and purposely to call into question and expose its own nakedness, it could not go beyond this, which is gravely taught in all seminaries, and patiently learnt by all school-boys as an exercise and discipline of the intellectual faculties. Again, it is roundly asserted that there are *six cases* (why not seven?) in the English language; and a case is defined to be a peculiar termination or inflection added to a noun to show its position in the sentence. Now in the Latin language there are no doubt a number of cases, inasmuch as there are a number of inflections;<sup>1</sup> and for the same reason (if words have a meaning) in the English Language there are none, or only one, the genitive; because if we except this, there is no inflection or variety whatever in the terminations. Thus to instance in the present noun—A case, Of a case, To a case, A case, O case, From a case—they tell you that the word *case* is here its own nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, vocative, and ablative, though the deuce of any case—that is inflection of the noun—is there in the case. Nevertheless, many a pedagogue would swear till he was black in the face that it is so; and would lie awake many a restless night boiling with rage and vexation that any one should be so lost to shame and reason as to suspect that there is here also a distinction without a difference. In strictness, in the Latin word there are only four, *casus*, *casui*, *casum*, *casu*; and the rest are conceded out of uniformity with other cases where the terminations are six times varied;<sup>2</sup> but why insist on the full complement, where there is no case in the whole language (but for the arbitrary one already excepted) to bear it out? Again, it is agreed on all hands, that English nouns have genders. Except with a few, where the termination is borrowed from another language, such as *Empress*, &c. there is no possibility of generally telling the sex implied from the form of the termination: but men

<sup>1</sup> This was necessary in Latin, where no order was observed in the words of a sentence: in English the juxtaposition generally determines the connection.

<sup>2</sup> *Quere*, Is the vocative ever a case?

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looking at the point with their Latin eyes, see genders wherever they have been accustomed to find them in a foreign tongue. The difference of sex is vernacularly conveyed in English by a different word—*man, woman, stag, deer, king, queen, &c.*; and there is no such thing as conventional gender in neutral things—*house, church, field*, and so on. All this might be excusable as a prejudice or oversight; but then why persist in it in the thirty-eighth edition of a standard book published by the great firm in Paternoster-row? We sometimes think mankind have a propensity to lying not more in matters-of-fact than theory. They maintain what they know to be without a shadow of foundation, and in the sheer spirit of contradiction, or because they hate to be convinced. In the same manner as the cases and genders of nouns, the whole ramification of the verb is constructed, and hung up for the admiration of the credulous upon the ideal of the Latin and Greek verb, with all its tenses, persons, moods, and participles, whether there be anything more than a mere skeleton of a resemblance to suspend all this learned patch-work upon or not. ‘*I love, thou lovest, he loves; we, ye, they love.*’ There is a difference in the three first, so that from announcing the verb, you know the prefix; but in the three last, what difference is there, what sign of separation from one another, or from the first person singular? ‘*I loved*’ is the past tense doubtless: it is a difference of inflection denoting time: but ‘*I did love, I have loved, I will, can, shall, would love,*’ are not properly tenses or moods of the verb *love*, but other verbs with the infinitive or participle of the first verb appended to them. Thus is our irregular verb professionally licked into regularity and shape. When the thing is wanting it is supplied by the name. *Empedocles was a cobbler, even when he did not cobble.* A conjunction is held to be a part of speech without any meaning in itself, but that serves to connect sentences together, such as *that, and, &c.* It is proved by Mr. Horne Tooke, that the conjunction *that* is no other than the pronoun *that* (with the words *thing* or *proposition* understood)—as *and* is the imperative of the old Saxon verb *anandad* (to add), upon a similar principle—‘*I say this and (or add) that*’—and though it is above fifty years since this luminous discovery was published to the world, no hint of it has crept into any Grammar used in schools, and by authority. It seems to be taken for granted that all sound and useful knowledge is by rote, and that if it ceased to be so, the Church and State might crumble to pieces like the conjunctions *and* and *that*. There may be some truth in that.

It is strange that Mr. Horne Tooke, with all his logical and etymological acuteness, should have been so bad a metaphysician as to argue that all language was merely a disjointed tissue of names of

## MEMORABILIA OF MR. COLERIDGE

objects (with certain abbreviations), and that he should have given or attempted no definition of the verb. He barely hints at it in one place, *viz.*—that the verb is *quod loquimur*, the noun *de quo*; that is, the noun expresses the name of any thing or points out the object; the verb signifies the opinion or will of the speaker concerning it. What then becomes of the *infinitive mood*, which neither affirms, denies, nor commands any thing, but is left like a log of wood in the high road of grammar, to be picked up by the first jaunting-car of ‘winged words’ that comes that way with its moods, persons, and tenses flying, and turned to any use that may be wanted? Mr. Tooke was in the habit of putting off his guests at Wimbledon with promising to explain some *puzzle* the following Sunday; and he left the world in the dark as to the definition of the verb, much in the same spirit of *badinage* and mystery. We do not know when the deficiency is likely to be supplied, unless it has been done by Mr. Fearn in his little work called *Anti-Tooke*. We have not seen the publication, but we know the author to be a most able and ingenious man, and capable of lighting upon nice distinctions which few but himself would ever dream of. An excess of modesty, which doubts every thing, is much more favourable to the discovery of truth than that spirit of dogmatism which presumptuously takes every thing for granted; but at the same time it is not equally qualified to place its conclusions in the most advantageous and imposing light; and we accordingly too often find our quacks and impostors collecting a crowd with their drums, trumpets, and *placards* of themselves at the end of a street, while the ‘still, small’ pipe of truth and simplicity is drowned in the loud din and bray, or forced to retire to a distance to solace itself with its own low tones and fine-drawn distinctions. Having touched upon this subject, we may be allowed to add that some of our most eminent writers, as, for instance, Mr. Macculloch with his *Principles of Political Economy*, and Mr. Mill with his *Elements of Political Economy*, remind us of two barrel-organ grinders in the same street, playing the same tune and contending for precedence and mastery. What is Mozart to any of the four?

## MEMORABILIA OF MR. COLERIDGE

*The Atlas.*

March 22, 1829.

He said of an old cathedral, that it always appeared to him like a *petrified religion*.

Hearing some one observe that the religious sentiments introduced in Sheridan’s *Pizarro* met with great applause on the stage, he replied,

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that he thought this a sure sign of the decay of religion; for when people began to patronise it as an amiable theatrical sentiment, they had no longer any real faith in it.

He said of a Mr. H——, a friend of Fox's, who always put himself forward to interpret the great orator's sentiments, and almost took the words out of his mouth, that it put him in mind of the steeple of St. Thomas, on Ludgate-hill, which is constantly getting in the way when you wish to see the dome of St. Paul's.

Seeing a little soiled copy of Thomson's *Seasons* lying in the window-seat of an obscure inn on the sea-coast of Somersetshire, he said, 'That is true fame.'

He observed of some friend, that he had *thought himself* out of a handsome face, and into a fine one.

He said of the French, that they received and gave out sensations too quickly, to be a people of imagination. He thought Molière's father must have been an Englishman.

According to Mr. Coleridge, common rhetoricians argued by metaphors; Burke reasoned *in* them.

He considered acuteness as a *shop-boy* quality compared with subtlety of mind; and quoted Paine as an example of the first, Berkeley as the perfection of the last.

He extolled Bishop Butler's *Sermons at the Rolls' Chapel* as full of thought and sound views of philosophy; and conceived that he had proved the love of piety and virtue to be as natural to the mind of man as the delight it receives from the colour of a rose or the smell of a lily. He spoke of the *Analysis* as theological special-pleading.

He had no opinion of Hume, and very idly disputed his originality. He said the whole of his argument on miracles was to be found stated (as an objection) somewhere in Barrow.

He said Thomson was a true poet, but an indolent one. He seldom wrote a good line, but he 'rewarded resolution' by following it up with a bad one. Cowper he regarded as the reformer of the Della Cruscan style in poetry, and the founder of the modern school.

Being asked which he thought the greater man, Milton or Shakspeare, he replied that he could hardly venture to pronounce an opinion—that Shakspeare appeared to him to have the strength, the stature of his rival, with infinitely more agility; but that he could not bring himself after all to look upon Shakspeare as any thing more than a beardless stripling, and that if he had ever arrived at man's estate, he would not have been a man but a monster of intellect.

Being told that Mrs. Woolstonecroft exerted a very great ascendancy over the mind of her husband, he said—'It was always the case: people of imagination naturally took the lead of people of mere

## MEMORABILIA OF MR. COLERIDGE

understanding and acquirement.' This was scarcely doing justice to the author of *Caleb Williams*.

He spoke of Mackintosh as deficient in original resources: he was neither the great merchant nor manufacturer of intellectual riches; but the ready warehouseman, who had a large assortment of goods, not properly his own, and who knew where to lay his hand on whatever he wanted. An argument which he had sustained for three hours together with another erudite person on some grand question of philosophy, being boasted of in Coleridge's hearing as a mighty achievement, the latter bluntly answered—'Had there been a man of genius among you, he would have settled the point in five minutes.'

Having been introduced to a well-known wit and professed jester, and his own silence being complained of, he said he should no more think of speaking where Mr. — was present, than of interrupting an actor on the stage.

Mr. Coleridge preferred Salvator Rosa to Claude, therein erring. He however spoke eloquently and feelingly of pictures, where the subject-matter was poetical, and where 'more was meant than met the eye.' Thus he described the allegorical picture by Giotto in the cemetery at Pisa, the *Triumph of Death*, where the rich, the young, and the prosperous, are shrinking in horror and dismay from the grim monster; and the wretched, the cripple, and the beggar, are invoking his friendly aid, both in words and tones worthy of the subject. Mr. Coleridge's was the only conversation we ever heard in which the ideas seemed set to music—it had the materials of philosophy and the sound of music; or if the thoughts were sometimes poor and worthless, the accompaniment was always fine.

He stated of Henderson, the actor, or some person of whom a very indifferent jest was repeated, that it was the strongest proof of his ability, and of the good things he *must have said* to make his bad ones pass current.

He characterised the *Prometheus Bound* of Æschylus, as being less a drama than an *Ode to Justice*.

He said that formerly men concealed their vices; but now, in the change of manners and the laxity of theories, they boasted of those they had not.

He sometimes told a story well, though but rarely. He used to speak with some drollery and unction of his meeting in his tour in Germany with a Lutheran clergyman, who expressed a great curiosity about the fate of Dr. Dodd in a Latin gibberish which he could not at first understand. '*Doctorem Tott, Doctorum Tott! Infelix homo, collo suspensus!*'—he called out in an agony of suspense, fitting the

## COQUETS

action to the word, and the idea of the reverend divine just then occurring to Mr. Coleridge's imagination. The Germans have a strange superstition that Dr. Dodd is still wandering in disguise in the Hartz forest in Germany; and his *Prison Thoughts* are a favourite book with the initiated.

If these remarkable sayings are fewer than the reader might expect, they are all we remember; and we might avail ourselves of the answer which Quevedo puts into the mouth of the door-keeper of Hell, when the poet is surprised to find so few kings in his custody—'There are all that ever existed!'

## COQUETS

*The Atlas.*

March 22, 1829.

It sometimes excites considerable surprise, that there is a class of women, who without anything very prepossessing in their persons or appearance (though in general more remarkable for wit than beauty), make conquests wherever they go, and carry off their lovers from the whole tribe of languishing and disappointed maidens. These are commonly known by the name of *coquets*; and the secret on which they act, if not a very profound, is a sure one. It is the dictate of extreme vanity or extreme boldness, aiming at its object, and breaking down the restraints by which the female character is surrounded. Let any woman, neither old nor ugly, and passing for modest, *throw herself* (as the phrase is) *at any man's head* she meets with, and she may set him down as her own from that time forward, unless he be either very wise or very stupid. It is the transition from modesty to impudence that takes by surprise and overcomes all scruples. It is like turning aside the mask and showing the features at a masked ball, which the favoured lover thinks is for himself alone. This instant thawing and melting of the cold, rigid, frost-work of prudery—this playing off of all the artillery of sighs, looks, smiles, soft tones, sidelong glances, fits of abstraction, the alternate depressions and altitudes of the coquet, are attributed by the unsuspecting dupe of them to her being seized with a sudden and uncontrollable passion, to love at first sight; the appeal is made direct, and *vi et armis*, to his self-love; and what heart of man, not devoid of every spark of gallantry and gratitude, can withstand so many demonstrations of the most interesting and amiable emotions? The extraordinary forwardness of her behaviour, her disregard of forms and decorum, are only a due tribute to his extraordinary merit—proofs of taste and spirit in his *inamorata*, however they might be the height of indiscretion and impropriety in any case but his own; he never once dreams (from the lady's character and situation in life)

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that the same airs and graces have been practised upon any other living being; and he imagines that it is her heart alone that does a violence to her habitual shyness and modesty. Pity that so much merit should not be the reward of so much discernment and innocent frankness of character! It is not the charming woman, but the charming man, who has produced this metamorphosis and almost thrown the fair one into hysterics, that our coxcomb is thinking of; and if the art of the witch has laid the bait, it is the vanity of the fool that swallows it. In fact, the manners of a *coquet* amount to a point-blank declaration of love, and to this challenge coming from a woman of character (and not absolutely hideous) we apprehend there is no answer but one—the surrendering as prisoner at discretion. The happy man at length finds that he is not the only happy man—that others share the same bounties and the same graces from the same unexhausted source—

‘ From which she scatters favours manifold  
And does great liking show—  
Great liking unto many, but true love to few ’ :—

but by that time his charms are rivetted: the Circean herd keep one another in countenance, and she still contrives to persuade each in private that he is the only favourite. Suppose two ladies by themselves in the second tier of the boxes turn their looks by stealth at a man of rank and fashion who enters, that they watch his motions and evidently wish to catch his attention; all these overt or covert attacks are set down to the score of their profession, go for nothing, and hardly ruffle the surface of the senses, much less touch the heart. But transport them into the dress-circle (which implies a character to lose), and the same ogles, simpers, fluttering, and fidgetting, are translated into a different and most significant language—it is a mystery, a riddle, an adventure—a something worth getting to the bottom of. Our man of rank and fashion follows them out, hands them to a hackney-coach, they still keep up appearances, and it is only in virtue of a shower of gallantry, wit and humour, that he extorts a reluctant consent to an assignation for the next day—and thus, by a mere change of external circumstances, our two jilts are exalted to the skies, or have descended from them—it is a revival of the gay masquerading days of Charles II.—they are the genuine representatives of Waller’s Sacharissa, of Cowley’s Galatea, or heroines of romance, and he is the knight-errant of these princesses in disguise. Or suppose one of the undesigning creatures is introduced to you at a party, and that she immediately sets to work in her vocation of *fascinating*—that she looks at you, talks at you, listens to you, blushes, weeps, and smiles at you, seems to be occupied with nobody but you, and to be as full of you as every one fortunately



## MANNERS MAKE THE MAN

is of himself—is there anything more necessary to her having it in her power to *laugh at you*, or to your throwing yourself at her feet? This character is most fatal, in proportion as the prude is the ground-work of it, and makes the contrast more striking. Blushes tell better from a pale face than through painted cheeks; soft, downcast eyes do more mischief when they meet yours, than bold, staring ones; and the more the flirt resembles a vestal or a marble statue, the more irresistible she will be in her character of an enchantress. If a lady's pulling off her glove is a challenge, surely her showing her whole soul through her eyes, without a rag or a remnant on it, demands some acknowledgment in return. Women may see by this, what cheap things conquests are—they only require a character for reserve and propriety of behaviour with sufficient effrontery to go out of it, *in appearance*, to every individual in the company. Men in like manner are favourites with the other sex, whose whole time and thoughts seem devoted to pleasing

‘The fair, the chaste, the inexpressive *she*,’

and who make love by implication to every woman they speak to or pass in the street.

## MANNERS MAKE THE MAN

*The Atlas.*

March 29, 1829.

As a pendant to this good old saying, it might be added, *Ill manners make the Englishman*. The Irish are hearty, the Scotch plausible, the French polite, the Germans good-natured, the Italians courtly, the Spaniards reserved and decorous—the English alone seem to exist in taking and giving offence. This is not shown in occasional acts, or on particular provocations, which might be the exception—it is the rule, the order of the day and night, with them; it is their mode of being, a natural craving which they cannot do without, a something *bred in the bone which will not out of the flesh*, an innate idea, a right and a privilege to which as free-born Britons they are entitled. If you question it, they stare at you or knock you down: take them out of a quarrel or a grievance, and they are *like fish out of water*. As children when cutting their teeth have a piece of coral to rub their gums against and are quite fractious if it be taken from them, so our countrymen, when grown up to years of discretion, require some hard outward object which they may strike their knuckles or run their heads against. John Bull is of the *butting* kind. It has been observed of the English that they are not particularly alive to the sensations of the eye or ear, of the taste or smell, or even those of a grosser kind; they are tolerably indifferent to music, painting, made dishes, artificial perfumes, nay to gallantry and intrigue (all of which they consider as frivolous and

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effeminate indulgences)—but they glory in the merely *tangible*, in the harsh and repulsive, in what offers resistance to their wills and gives scope to the exercise of their violence and impatience. It has been pleaded in extenuation of the brutality and coarseness of the English, that it is owing to the habit of drunkenness which prevails amongst them; but this habit is itself owing to the fermentation of their spirits, to the ill-concoction of their blood, and want of comfort in their ordinary state of being, and is encouraged as an additional stimulus to *run a-muck* at decency and good manners, and allow an unbridled license to an abusive tongue. Oaths and curses fly faster, and blows are more freely dealt round, but this only serves to carry off ‘the perilous stuff that weighed upon the heart.’ Two young fellows prime themselves with wine or *blue ruin*, and sally out of the Bedford or the *Hole in the Wall*, to pick a quarrel or kick up a *row* in the street. They stick their hands in the side-pockets of their box-coats and a cigar in their mouths, and strutting strait forward, fancy themselves Great Men, for they care for nobody. How are they to impart the high opinion they entertain of themselves to their loving countrymen? Of course by showing a superlative contempt for every one they meet—by thrusting their elbows, which they have a right to stick out from their side-pockets, as they please against the men, and turning round and puffing the smoke of their cigars right in the faces of the women. Is it not strange that any set of people, however high or however low (for the distinctions are confounded both by dress and manners), should fancy that they can only pass for gentlemen by behaving like blackguards? The truth is, that such persons, having no self-confidence or self-respect, are obliged to creep into favour with themselves by putting on a swaggering air of insolence and impudence to others. If the march right a-head will not do, and excites no attention as a thing of course, they then resort to active measures and monkey-tricks—*quiz* the passengers, get in your way, or come up and ask some slang question to promote a *lark*; and if you remonstrate or ask what they mean, they will not stand any nonsense, consider your turning to bay as a high misdemeanour and breach of street-privilege, and are presently half-stripped and ready for you with *one, two, or three*, which is in truth the butt-end of all their movements and faculties, and ‘a consummation devoutly to be wished’ by these accomplished and scientific proficient, who have no notion but of their own doubled fists and some hapless opponent’s nose crumbling like paste under them. Poor Michael Angelo complained of suffering a certain defalcation in this member of his face from the hands of Torregiano,<sup>1</sup> who ‘had been so long among those blackguard English!’ If you decline the invitation to a sparring-

<sup>1</sup> The sculptor of Henry VIII.’s tomb in Westminster Abbey.

## MANNERS MAKE THE MAN

match, you are overwhelmed with a volley of abuse in the style of Pierce Egan's *Sporting Calendar*; and if you make a last appeal and say, 'You know nothing of me, good or bad; all I know of you is that you interrupted me unnecessarily, and I am at a loss to conceive how your rudeness or impertinence can give you any advantage over me,' this sort of argumentation touches the quick; and it is as much as one of the pair of friends (the Nysus or Euryalus) can do to prevent the other from making mincemeat of you, such is the genius of our isle; or, as Lord Castlereagh observed, liberty is a custom of England. Look at those heroes in dazzling uniform who march up and down St. James's Street or Pall-mall three abreast with an air that threatens to walk over man, woman, and child. Is it to be supposed that anything can stand in the way of men who have been at Waterloo or Walcheren? The state of the case really is, that they have just as much right to kick you off the pavement as to shove you off it. Instead of bespeaking the whole length and breadth of the street to themselves, cavaliers and men of honour would take their own side of it the moment they saw anyone else coming, lest it should be suspected that the presumption of claiming what was not their due had passed through their minds for an instant. A chimney-sweeper is the only match for your regimental Bond Street loungee. You go to the play—at half-price, in rush the 'hope and the expectancy of the fair state,' the rising generation, box-lobby loungees, dandies, and 'prentice-boys, an undistinguishable throng. They tumble into their seats and over you. Is it their object to improve their taste, to practise good breeding, to see or hear the play? No; their only object is to make a noise and hinder you from knowing anything about it. Not to keep their hats on, not to stand up before you, not to clamber over the benches, not to slap to the doors, would be a spiritless surrender of the rights and franchises of Englishmen. To pay the least regard to others is low and vulgar—to swagger and bully and be disagreeable, is the sign of a fine gentleman, and d-vilish good fellow. Oh for a little French gravity and decorum! After showing their contempt for the audience, and having jarred your nerves for the rest of the evening, out they go (tired of this scene of *still-life* and not willing to divide attention with the players), and you hear them in the lobbies, hectoring over a luckless woman, or quarrelling with a constable. All eyes are turned to the little box-windows, the doors fly open in hopes of witnessing a Billingsgate scene or a bear-garden *set-to*, and Shakespeare or Wycherley becomes an unregarded pageant. This desire for personal collision, for battery and assault, or for giving ourselves a sensation by inflicting pain on others, is evident everywhere. If you are paying for a parcel on the counter of a coach-office, a porter comes in and contrives to fling his load down on your

## THE REVEREND EDWARD IRVING

hand. People poke their umbrellas in your eyes, butchers'-boys their trays in your face. The foot-passengers run up against you, the hackney-coachmen drive over you. If you are on your guard against them, they drive slow to impede you. If there be a crowd in the street and just room to pass, one person sticks himself there, and obstinately maintains the position like another pass of Thermopylæ. Nothing exposes a person to surer insults in the streets of London than being the first to hold up an umbrella in a shower of rain—the unkindness of the elements must be foul and flagrant, or it must rain *cats and dogs*, before the envy and malice of the vulgar at this assumption of superiority over them can be appeased, and indeed it used to be remarked by a shrewd wag, that the greatest distinction in civilised society was between one person in a shower of rain who had an umbrella and another who had not. At the present season, 'while yet the year is raw and unconfirmed,' we may see groups of holiday-folks on a Sunday standing at the corners of streets at Islington or Kentish-town, and endeavouring to enliven their half-starved minds and give a brisker current to their frozen blood by witty remarks on everyone that passes by, either better or worse dressed than themselves. So civil, so good-natured, and self-satisfied a people are the English! In a word, ignorance and impudence always go together; for in proportion as we are unacquainted with other things, must we feel a want of respect for them; and by being cut off by our insular situation from an intercourse with strangers (which 'cribs and confines' the habitual range of the imagination), we learn to despise not only them, but one another too.

## THE REVEREND EDWARD IRVING: AN HYPOTHESIS

*The Examiner.*

March 29, 1829.

Suppose the Rev. E. Irving to be a mile high, instead of six feet three inches: let him resemble one of earth's firstborn, Titan, or Briareus, or 'blind Orion hungry for the morn'—with strength proportioned and zeal unabated: Heavens! how he would stalk along, the terror of unbelievers, a monster of self-styled godliness: how he would lay about him right and left, what havoc he would make among Catholics and Unitarians, trampling them into the earth or throwing them into the sea, so that not a single trace of them would be left—he would be ready to cry out with the giant in the story-book, '*Fee, fo, fum*, I smell the blood of an Irishman'—

'And at one sup  
He'd eat them up,  
As a man would eat an apple!'

## THE REVEREND EDWARD IRVING :

Oh no ! give him the power and you take away the malice—let him possess the stature and pre-eminence to which he vainly aspires, and he would become as meek as a lamb, as fine a gentleman as the King at Windsor ! He would in that case think no more of crushing Catholics and Dissenters into the dust than he at present tramples indignantly on the insect in his path or troubles himself about the Guelph or Ghibeline factions of an ant-hill ! But he is only six feet three inches high, and he can neither lay violent hands on a single individual without the King's warrant nor compel the whole Christian world into his fold by any arguments he is master of ; and it is this circumstance alone, the sense of the disproportion between the sphere of his power and the strength of his will, that swells him up with mortified vanity and spiritual pride, that kindles his rage and impatience nearly to phrenzy, and vents itself in the most shocking denunciations against the present and future welfare of all those who differ from him in the slightest manner. Being himself unable to carry his threats and schemes of vengeance into execution, he arms the Almighty with his own pride and passions for that purpose—conceives of the Deity as a being endowed with all his own failings and irritable humours in an infinitely exaggerated degree, and falls down before this profane image of a heated fancy as the benevolent father of the universe—proceeds unceremoniously to deal damnation round the land on each he judges to be his foe, sets up for the right-hand and privy-counsellor of Providence, and bullies weak and nervous people into the opinion that he is so.—As to the Calvinistic doctrine of eternal punishments for the smallest offences as necessary to appease the divine justice, it may be disposed of categorically thus. It is pretended that the magnitude of the offence rises with the dignity of the person offended—that an affront offered to a magistrate is punished more severely than if it were offered to a common person ; that an offence against the person of a king is greater still ; and that the smallest offence against God, being directed against infinite power and goodness, must be deserving of a proportionable, that is, an infinite and everlasting punishment. First, the principle here laid down only applies to artificial power and dignity, which, depending on opinion, may be shaken by opinion, and where even a casual slight or expression of disparagement might be fatal to the whole fabric of law and authority. Otherwise, the greater the real power and superiority, the less possibility is there of giving offence. A knight of old could not be offended by nor give satisfaction to a clown or slave. A lion is not very tenacious of his superiority over other animals on the score of strength. The kings of the earth depend on opinion : the king of Heaven does not. There can be no offence of a personal kind given without some sort of equality, competition, or fear of a re-action. Is it answered?—

## AN HYPOTHESIS

Secondly, it is laid down that the smallest offence against God being committed in the sight of an infinitely wise and good being, 'who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity,' must appear like a spot of the deepest dye, must cause an infinite degree of disapprobation, and subject the offender to an unmitigated and never-ending punishment in consequence. Now if this were the case, and infinite justice required this sacrifice, infinite goodness would arrest the hand of infinite power and put a stop to the work of creation before it had proceeded a single step. For by the supposition even the Deity cannot create any other being equal to himself and absolutely perfect, and therefore every being so created being liable to some flaw, imperfection, or infirmity, would be contemplated ever after by the divine artificer with infinite pain and displeasure, which nothing could appease but inflicting a like degree of evil on the creatures, and consequently out of every act of creation, involving (as it must from its own nature) the smallest degree of evil, the necessity for an infinite aggravation of that evil would arise in order to satisfy the divine Majesty. It is plain that, with this alternative in view as the indispensable consequence of one attribute of the divine nature, *viz.* justice, the other two, goodness and power, would refuse to act. For if no being could possibly be created without some imperfection, from the very relation between the creature and creator, and then drawing down lasting enmity upon it for this very imperfection, no being of the smallest generosity or regard to his creatures would ever produce them at all into what would only be a universe of misery. Even human frailty refuses to transmit painful and distressing maladies to future generations,—how much more impossible, then, for the Father of all to entail wilful and endless misery on his creation! The argument amounts to a contradiction in terms, and requires us to suppose that infinite truth and rectitude, being shocked at the smallest possible evil, in order to remedy it, proceeds remorselessly to inflict the greatest possible evil, *to which it is perfectly indifferent*. Is it answered?—To compare small things with great, and be familiar after the manner of the Methodists—can any one suppose that Sir Isaac Newton, with the accessions of knowledge which his mild spirit may have acquired in the starry sphere, would be thrown into convulsions of rage and agony on beholding some mistake which a poor village schoolmaster had committed in a sum in arithmetic?—and shall we suppose the Divine Being, who is the great geometer of the universe, to be unable to endure or witness without emotions of intolerable loathing, those mixed results which he has contemplated from the beginning to the end of time, and ordained in their eternal and immutable progression? Forbid it, decency and common sense!

## PETER PINDAR

### PETER PINDAR

*The Atlas.*

*April 5 1829.*

THIS celebrated wit and character lived to a great age, and retained his spirit and faculties to the last. In person he did not at all answer to Mr. Cobbett's description of authors, as a lean, starveling, puny race—'men made after supper of a cheese-paring'—he was large, robust, portly, and florid; or in Chaucer's phrase,

'A manly man to ben an abbot able.'

In his latter years he was blind, and had his head close shaved; and as he sat bare-headed, presented the appearance of a fine old monk—a Luther or a *Friar John*, with the gravity of the one and the wit and fiery turbulence of the other. Peter had something clerical in his aspect: he looked like a venerable father of poetry, or an unworthy son of the church, equally fitted to indict a homily and preach a crusade, or to point an epigram, and was evidently one of those children of Momus in whom the good things of the body had laid the foundation of and given birth to the good things of the mind. He was one of the few authors who did not disappoint the expectations raised of them on a nearer acquaintance; and the reason probably was what has been above hinted at, namely, that he did not take to this calling from nervous despondency and constitutional poverty of spirit, but from the fulness and exuberance of his intellectual resources and animal spirits. Our satirist was not a mere wit, but a man of strong sense and observation, critical, argumentative, a good declaimer, and with a number of acquirements of various kinds. His poetry, instead of having absorbed all the little wit he had (which is so often the case), was but 'the sweepings of his mind.' He said just as good things every hour in the day. He was the life and soul of the company where he was—told a story admirably, gave his opinion freely, spoke equally well, and with thorough knowledge of poetry, painting, or music, could 'haloo an anthem' with stentorian lungs in imitation of the whole chorus of children at St. Paul's, or bring the black population of the West Indies before you like a swarm of flies in a sugar-basin, by his manner of describing their antics and odd noises. Dr. Wolcot's conversation was rich and powerful (not to say overpowering)—there was an extreme unction about it, but a certain tincture of grossness. His criticism was his best. We remember in particular his making an excellent analysis of Dryden's *Alexander's Feast* in a controversy on its merits with Mr. Curran; and as a specimen of his *parallelisms* between the sister-arts, he used to say of Viotti (the celebrated violin-player), that 'he was the Michael Angelo of the

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fiddle.' He had a heresy in painting, which was, that Claude Lorraine was inferior to Wilson; but the orthodox believers were obliged to be silent before him. A short time before his death he had a private lodging at Somers' Town, where he received a few friends. He sat and talked familiarly and cheerfully, asking you whether you thought his head would not make a fine bust? He had a decanter of rum placed on the table before him, from which he poured out a glass-full as he wanted it and drank it pure, taking no other beverage, but not exceeding in this. His infirmities had made no alteration in his conversation, except perhaps a little more timidity and hesitation; for blindness is the *lameness* of the mind. He could not see the effect of what he said lighting up the countenances of others; and in this case, the tongue may run on the faster, but hardly so well. After coffee, which he accompanied with the due quantity of *merum sal*, he would ask to be led down into a little parlour below, which was hung round with some early efforts of his own in landscape-painting, and with some of Wilson's unfinished sketches. Though he could see them no longer, otherwise than in his mind's eye, he was evidently pleased to be in the room with them, as they brought back former associations. Youth and age seem glad to meet as it were on the last hill-top of life, to shake hands once more and part for ever! He spoke slightly of his own performances (though they were by no means contemptible), but launched out with great fervour in praise of his favourite Wilson, and in disparagement of Claude, enlarging on the fine broad manner and bold effects of the one, and on the finical littleness of the other, and 'making the worse appear the better reason.' It was here we last parted with this fine old man, and it is with mixed pleasure and regret we turn to the subject. Peter Pindar, besides his vein of comic humour, excelled when he chose in the serious and pathetic; and his 'Lines to a Fly drowned in Treacle,' and 'To an Expiring Taper,' are among his best pieces.

## LOGIC

*The Atlas.*

*April 12, 1829.*

MUCH has been said and written of the importance of logic to the advancement of truth and learning, but not altogether convincingly. Its use is chiefly confined by some to being a guide to the mind when first feeling its way out of the night of ignorance and barbarism, or a curb to the wilful and restive spirit that is a rebel to reason and common sense. But the extent of the benefit in either case may be doubted; since the rude and uninstructed will not submit to artificial



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trammels, or get up into this *go-cart* of the understanding, and the perverse and obstinate will jump out of it whenever their prejudices or passions are wound up to a height to make its restraints necessary. The wilful man will have his way in spite of the dictates of his reason or the evidence of his senses either. The study of logic has been compared to the getting ready and sharpening the tools with which the mind works out the truth; but all that is of value in it is more like the natural use of our hands, or resembles the mould in which truth must be cast, and which is born with us, rather than an external instrument with which it must be fashioned; for all syllogisms reduce themselves either to identical propositions, or to certain forms and relations of ideas in the understanding, which are antecedent to, and absolutely govern, our conclusions with the rules for drawing them. The mind cannot *make an instrument to make truth*, as it contrives an instrument to make a certain object; for in the latter case, the object depends upon the act and will of the mind; but in the former, the mind is passive to the impression of given objects upon it, and this depends on certain laws over which it has itself no control. Logic at best only lays down the rules and laws by which our reason operates; but it must operate according to those rules and laws equally whether they are adverted to or not, or they could not be laid down as infallible. Truth is, in a word, the shape which our ideas take in the moulds of the understanding, just as the potter's clay derives its figure (whether round or square) from the mould in which it is cast. Thus, if we are told that one wine-glass is less than another, and that the larger wine-glass is less than a third, we know that the third wine-glass is larger than the first, without either comparing them or having any general rule to prove it by. We can no more conceive it otherwise, or do away that regular gradation and proportion between the objects so defined and characterised, than we can imagine the same thing to grow bigger and become less at the same time. Reasoning is allowed (at least by the schoolmen and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, though not by our wise sceptical moderns) to be the linking of one judgment on to two others: *this* and *that* being given, why then something else follows. Thus, suppose two roads to take a diverging direction, you are sure, without measuring, that the farther you go in the one, the farther you get from the other. You know that you advance: you *infer* that you recede. Now the difficulty lies here—if the premises are the same with the conclusion, it amounts only to an identical proposition: if they are different, what is the connection between them? But in the example just given, there are two circumstances, or properties, stated at the outset of the question, *viz.*—not merely the existence, but

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the direction, of the road ; and to sustain the inference, all that seems necessary is, that both these circumstances should be borne in mind. For if the road do not continue to *diverge*, the conclusion will not hold good ; and if it still continue to diverge, what is this but saying, not only that it advances, but that it advances in a direction which, by the supposition, carries it farther at every step from the former road ? That is, two things are affirmed of a given object ; the mind sets out with a complex proposition, and what it has to do is not to forget one-half of it by the way. It would be long enough before the abstract idea of a road would imply its distance from another ; but it would also be hard if a diverging road—that is, a road that recedes while it advances—did not recede. A mathematical line and its direction are not two things, like the feet of a pair of compasses—that while the line is moving one way, the direction may be going astray in another—but mutually implied and inseparably connected together in nature or the understanding—let the *realists* or *idealists* determine which they please. Or, as the wise man said to the daughter of King Cophetua, ‘ That which is, is ; for what is *that* but *that*, and *is* but *is* ? ’<sup>1</sup> The worst of the matter is, that the most important conclusions are not to be so easily enclosed in pews and forms of words and definitions ; and that to catch the truth as it flies, is as nice a point as hedging the cuckoo : though they say that its wings have been lately clipped and a pound built for it somewhere in Westminster. Not to proceed farther in this subject, and get ‘ over shoes, over boots ’ in the mire of metaphysics, we shall conclude this article with what we meant to state at the commencement of it, to wit—that the commonest form of the syllogism is the worst of all, being a downright fallacy and *petitio principii*. It consists in including the individual in the species, and

<sup>1</sup> An identical proposition is not an inference ; but all reasoning consists in inference, or in finding out one thing as implied in another. In comparing any two objects, I have nothing previously given and cannot predict the result ; but having made the comparison, I have then something determined and fixed to go by ; and what else I discover or imagine must be in conformity with this first knowledge. This coherence in propositions, or in the mind, is the force of *reason*, whereby one idea acts as the ground-work or cause of another. If I apply B as a common measure to A and C, and find it the same with both, it follows that they are equal to one another ; since otherwise I must suppose the same thing (B) to be equal to unequal things, which is impossible as long as I retain my senses, or more properly, my recollection. I have ascertained two lines to be of the length of a third ; that length cannot differ from itself ; and therefore having settled what the two lines are with respect to the third, I cannot conceive them to be different with respect to one another, without forgetting myself, or what I know of them. If I had no power of contemplating different propositions together, I could draw no such conclusion ; the conclusion therefore results from this comprehensive power of the mind ; and reason is the end or band that ties the bundle of our separate ideas, or the logical *fasciculus* together.

## THE LATE MR. CURRAN

runs thus : ' All men are mortal ; John is a man ; therefore John is mortal.' Let any one deny this at his peril ; but what is, or can be gained by such parrotting ? The first branch of the premises takes for granted and supposes that you already know all that you want to prove in the conclusion. For before you are entitled to assert roundly that all men are mortal, you must know this of John in particular, who is a man, which is the point you are labouring to establish ; or, if you do not know this of every individual man, and of John among the rest, then you have no right to make such a sweeping general assertion, which falls to the ground of itself. Either the premises are hasty or false, and the conclusion rotten that way ; or if they be sound, and proved as matter-of-fact to the extent which is pretended, then you have anticipated your conclusion, and your syllogism is pedantic and superfluous. In fact, this form of the syllogism is an unmeaning play upon words, or resolves itself into the merely probable or analogical argument, that because all other men *have died*, John, who is one of them, *will die* also. The inference relating to historical truth, and founded on the customary connection between cause and effect, is very different from logical proof, or the impossibility of conceiving of certain things otherwise than as inseparable. Suppose I see a row of pillars before me, and that I chuse to affirm—' Those hundred pillars are all of white marble ; the pillar directly facing me is one of the hundred ; therefore that pillar is also of white marble '—would not this be arrant trifling both with my own understanding and with that of any one who had patience to hear me ? But if I were to see a number of pillars resembling each other in outward appearance, and on examining all of them but one, found them of white marble and concluded that that one was of white marble too, there would be some common sense in this, but no logic. The mind, however, has a natural bias to wrap up its conclusions (of whatever kind or degree) in regular forms of words, and to deposit them in an imposing framework of demonstration ; it prefers the shadow of certainty to the substance of truth and candour ; and will not, if it can help it, leave a single loop-hole for doubt to creep in at. Hence the tribe of logicians, dogmatists, and verbal pretenders of all sorts.

## THE LATE MR. CURRAN

*The Atlas.*

*April 26, 1829.*

THIS celebrated wit and orator in his latter days was a little in the back-ground. He had lodgings at Brompton ; and riding into town one day, and hearing two gentlemen in the Park disputing about

## THE WAVERLEY NOTES

Mathews's Curran, he said—'In faith, it's the only Mr. Curran, that is ever talked of now-a-days.' He had some qualms about certain peccadillos of his past life, and wanted to make confessors of his friends. Certainly, a monastery is no unfit retreat for those who have been led away by the thoughtless vivacity of youth, and wish to keep up the excitement by turning the tables on themselves in age. The crime and the remorse are merely the alternations of the same passionate temperament. Mr. Curran had a flash of the eye, a musical intonation of voice, such as we have never known excelled. Mr. Mathews's imitation of him, though it has been much admired, does not come up to the original. Some of his bursts of forensic eloquence deserve to be immortal, such as that appalling expression applied to a hired spy and informer, that he 'had been buried as a man, and was dug up a witness.' A person like this might find language to describe the late *shots* at Edinburgh. Mr. Curran did not shine so much in Parliament; but he sometimes succeeded admirably in turning the laugh against his opponents. He compared the situation of government after they had brought over a member of Opposition to their side, and found the renegade of no use to them, to the story of the country-gentleman who bought Punch and complained of his turning out dull company. Some of Mr. Curran's *bon-mots* and sallies of humour were first-rate. He sometimes indulged in poetry, in which he did not excel. His taste in it was but indifferent. He neither liked *Paradise Lost* nor *Romeo and Juliet*. He had an ear for music, and both played and sung his native ballads delightfully. He contended that the English had no national music. He was an enthusiastic admirer of Mrs. Siddons. He said of John Kemble, that, 'he had an eye rather to *look at* than to *look with*.' His great passion was a love of English literature and the society of literary men. He occasionally found his account in it. Being one day in a group of philosophers, and the invention of fire being spoken of, one of the party suggested that it was from seeing a horse's shoe strike fire; 'and I suppose,' said Curran triumphantly, 'the horse-shoe was afterwards made with that fire.'

## THE WAVERLEY NOTES

*The Atlas.*

June 7, 1829.

THE *London Magazine*, speaking of Sir Walter Scott's notes on the Waverley novels, observes:

'We think Sir Walter has been unwise in letting us see the machinery of his scenery—which from the front had so beautiful an effect—and showing us some of the reality of characters which, as he had put them

## THE WAVERLEY NOTES

on the scene, were so admirable in their several natures. Why would not he leave—not well, but admirably—alone? Why show us the warp and woof of that tapestry which, in its unbetrayed state, was so perfect? In *Waverley*, this is less disadvantage than it will be anon. Oh! how we dread his giving us the *pleadings* in the *Heart of Mid-Lothian*.'

This is addressed to the imagination only, not to the judgment. The charms of a work professing to copy nature cannot be destroyed by the evidence that proves it to be founded upon truth; and, least of all, the *Waverley* novels. In showing us the reality of his characters, Sir Walter will not alter their nature; he will rather confirm it. Fiction is not necessarily the mere production of fancy, although much fancy is to be found in works of fiction; nor is it essential that fiction should be untrue, for the materials of our best fictions are principally drawn from fact. It is not a stage illusion, nor a magic lantern, presenting shadows and spectacles that either burlesque or flatter humanity; but a transcript from nature, in which the truth is preserved not *literally*, but *poetically*. And this is the difference between the notes and the text. The notes are the literal facts, the text the poetical transcript, in which the original is elaborated into a more continuous and imaginative series of impressions, and written out into more passionate and vivid language. Our enjoyment is not to be spoiled by a new means of estimating the author's skill; by that which will enable us to compare the finished statue with the clay from which it was formed. The plain fact will not constitute a novel; there must be the creative spirit to work up all its parts into an embellished picture, and superadd such matters as, although not actually true, are deducible from that which is, and are relatively consistent; and in proportion to the amount of truth will be the effect and value of the performance. The question then is, how far our pleasure will be interrupted by the assurance that certain portions are real, and how far our confidence in the rest will be thereby shaken. To know that Effie Deans lived and was accused, is not likely to produce a disbelief in the remaining parts of her story, which if not literally true might have been so, and seem as if they could not be dispensed with without violating the congruity of the whole. Her history is not the less touching because historical evidence does not attest it scene by scene; while its appeal to our feelings is enhanced by our knowledge that the main incident did happen, from which all the other details and circumstances appear to spring naturally. The disclosure of the sources of pleasure cannot philosophically be argued as a diminution of enjoyment. There is no person who believes the puppets of the *Petit Lazary* to be men and women, yet the fact that they are made of wood

## THE COURT JOURNAL—A DIALOGUE

and paint increases our wonder and delight. Could we see the machinery by which they are worked—which overstretchs the analogy—we would wonder still more how so much effect could be so simply produced. To be vexed at the shock our first enthusiasm might receive would be weakness or vanity; we should have known that there was a secret process going forward; if we did not know it, it is our vanity that is hurt at the exposure. Such vexation, however, would resemble the resentment of those who were deceived by the Shakespeare forgeries—they were annoyed that their want of penetration should be detected, and never forgave Ireland. But not even their indignation at the impious cheat upon the bard, could obtain them credit for possessing a sense of poetry. A true relish for nature can neither be deceived by a bad fiction, nor dissipated by the most prosaic illustrations.

## THE COURT JOURNAL—A DIALOGUE

*The Atlas.*

June 7, 1829.

M.—Have you seen the *Court Journal*?

G.—No: I only read some 'Maxims on Love,' which I seemed to have met with in some pre-existent work.

M.—Then you may tell C— from me it will not last three months. People of fashion do not want to read accounts of themselves, written by those who know nothing of the matter. This eternal babble about high life is an affront to every one else, and an impertinence with respect to those whom it is stupidly meant to flatter. What do those care about tiresome descriptions of satin ottomans and ormolu carvings, who are sick of seeing them from morning till night? No! they would rather read an account of Donald Bean Lean's Highland cave, strewn with rushes, or a relation of a row in a night-cellar in St. Giles's. What they and all mankind want, is to vary the monotonous round of their existence, to go out of themselves as much as possible; and not to have their own oppressive and idle pretensions served up to them again in a hash of mawkish affectation. They read *Cobbett*—it is like an electrical shock to them, or a plunge in a cold-bath: it braces while it jars their enervated fibres. He is a sturdy, blunt yeoman: the other is a foppish footman, dressed up in a cast-off finery. Or if Lord L— is delighted with a description (not well-done) of his own house and furniture, do you suppose that Lord H—, who is his rival in gewgaws and upholstery, will not be equally uneasy at it? As to the vulgar, what they like is to see fine sights and not to hear of them. They like to get inside a fine house, to see fine

## THE COURT JOURNAL—

things and touch them if they dare, and not to be tantalized with a vapid inventory, which does not gratify their senses, and mortifies their pride and sense of privation. The exaggerated admiration only makes the exclusion more painful: it is like a staring sign to a show which one has not money in one's pocket to pay for seeing. Mere furniture or private property can never be a subject to interest the public: the possessor is entitled to the sole benefit of it. If there were an account in the newspaper that all this finery was burnt to ashes, then all the world would be eager to read it, saying all the time how sorry they were, and what a shocking thing it was.

G.—Servants and country-people always turn to the accidents and offences in a newspaper.

M.—And their masters and mistresses too. Did you never read the *Newgate Calendar*?

G.—Yes.

M.—Well, that is not *genteel*. This is what renders the *Beggar's Opera* so delightful; you despise the actors in the scene, and yet the wit galls and brings down their *bettors* from their airy flight with all their borrowed plumage, so that we are put absolutely at our ease for the time with respect to our own darling pretensions. G—— was here the other evening; he said he thought the *Beggar's Opera* came after Shakspeare. I wonder who put that in his head; it was hardly his own discovery.

G.—It seems neither Lord Byron nor Burke liked the *Beggar's Opera*.

M.—They were the losers by that opinion: but how do you account for it?

G.—Lord Byron was a *radical* peer, Burke an upstart plebeian; neither of them felt quite secure in the *niche* where they had stationed themselves from the random-shots that were flying on the stage. They could not say with *Hamlet*, 'Our withers are unwrung.' As to Lord Byron, he might not relish the point of *Mrs. Peachum's* speech, 'Married a highwayman! Why, hussey, you will be as ill-treated and as much neglected as if you had married a lord!' Did you ever hear the story of Miss ——, when she was quite a girl, going to see Mrs. Siddons in the *Fatal Marriage*, and being taken out fainting into the lobby, and calling out, 'Oh *Biron*, *Biron*!'—'Egad!' said the cool narrator of the story, 'she has had enough of Byron since!' With regard to Burke, there was a rotten core, a Serbonian bog in his understanding, in which not only Gay's master-piece but the whole of what modern literature, wit, and reason had done for the world, sunk and was swallowed up in a fetid abyss for ever! But I am sorry you think no better of the *Court Journal*. I was in hopes

## A DIALOGUE

it might succeed, as a very old friend of mine has something to do with it.

M.—Oh! but mischief must be put a stop to. This is the most nauseous *toad-eating*, and it is as awkwardly done as it is ill-meant. There is a fulsome pretence set up in one paper that rank consists in birth and blood. It is at once to neutralise all the present race of fashion. The civil wars of York and Lancaster put an end to almost all the old nobility—there are none of the Plantagenets left now. Those who go to court think themselves lucky if they can trace as far back as the Nell Gwynns and Duchess of Clevelands in Charles the Second's days. Besides, all this prejudice about nobility and ancestry should be understood and worshipped in silence and at a distance, not thrown in the teeth of such people, as if they had nothing else to boast of. They should be told of perfections which they have not, as you praise a wit for her beauty and a fool for her wit. Your friend should read *Count Grammont* to learn how to flatter and cajole. Does not Mr. C—— know enough from experience of the desire of lords and ladies to turn authors, and shine, not in a ballroom, but on *his* counter?

G.—He expects the K—— to write; nay, it was with difficulty he was dissuaded from offering a round sum.

M.—How much, pray?

G.—Five thousand guineas for half a page.

M.—It would not sell a single copy. People would think it was a hoax and would not buy it. Those who believed it would not read it. Oh! there is a letter of Louis xviii. in a late number, on the death of some lady he was attached to: it is prettily done, but it is such good English, that I suspect it can hardly be a translation or an original. If they could procure curious documents of this kind, and had a magazine of the secrets, anecdotes, and correspondence of people of high rank, undoubtedly it would answer; but this would be another edition of the *Jockey Club*, and very different from its present insipidity. Even children will not be crammed with honey.

G.—I understand there is to be no scandal. All the great are to be supposed to be elegantly good, and to wear virtue with a grace peculiar to people of fashion.

M.—That will at any rate be new. And then I see there are criticisms on pictures: the writer is thrown into raptures with the portraits of Lord and Lady Castlereagh. And this is followed by a drawling, pitiable account of two little Corregios, as if they were miracles and had descended from heaven—the 'Madonna' and 'Mercury teaching Cupid to read.' They are well enough, though Sir Joshua has done the same thing better. But higher praise could not



## THE LATE DR. PRIESTLEY

be lavished on the 'St. Jerome' or the 'Night at Dresden,' or the 'Ceiling at Parma,' which is his best, though it has fallen into decay.

G.—Collectors think one Corregio just as good as another; and it is to meet this feeling, probably, that the article is written.

## THE LATE DR. PRIESTLEY

*The Atlas.*

June 14, 1829.

THE epithet of *the late* could not be applied to this celebrated character in the sense in which it has been turned upon some *late* wits and dinner-hunters as never being in time; if he had a fault, it was that of being precipitate and premature, of sitting down to the banquet which he had prepared for others before it was half-done; of seeing things with too quick and hasty a glance, of finding them in embryo, and leaving them too often in an unfinished state. This turn of his intellect had to do with his natural temper—he was impatient, somewhat peevish and irritable in little things, though not from violence or acerbity, but from seeing what was proper to be done quicker than others, and not liking to wait for an absurdity. On great and trying occasions, he was calm and resigned, having been schooled by the lessons of religion and philosophy, or, perhaps, from being, as it were, taken by surprise, and never having been accustomed to the indulgence of strong passions or violent emotions. His frame was light, fragile, neither strong nor elegant; and in going to any place, he walked on before his wife (who was a tall, powerful woman) with a primitive simplicity, or as if a certain restlessness and hurry impelled him on with a projectile force before others. His personal appearance was altogether singular and characteristic. It belonged to the class which may be called *scholastic*. His feet seemed to have been entangled in a gown, his features to have been set in a wig or taken out of a mould. There was nothing to induce you to say with the poet, that 'his body thought'; it was merely the envelop of his mind. In his face there was a strange mixture of acuteness and obtuseness; the nose was sharp and turned up, yet rounded at the end, a keen glance, a quivering lip, yet the aspect placid and indifferent, without any of that expression which arises either from the close workings of the passions or an intercourse with the world. You discovered the prim, formal look of the Dissenter—none of the haughtiness of the churchman nor the wildness of the visionary. He was, in fact, always the student in his closet, moved in or out, as it happened, with no perceptible variation :

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he sat at his breakfast with a folio volume before him on one side and a note-book on the other; and if a question were asked him, answered it like an absent man. He stammered, spoke thick, and huddled his words ungracefully together. To him the whole business of life consisted in *reading and writing*; and the ordinary concerns of this world were considered as a frivolous or mechanical interruption to the more important interests of science and of a future state. Dr. Priestley might, in external appearance, have passed for a French priest, or the lay-brother of a convent: in literature, he was the Voltaire of the Unitarians. He did not, like Mr. Southey, to be sure (who has been denominated the English Voltaire), vary from prose to poetry, or from one side of a question to another; but he took in a vast range of subjects of very opposite characters, treated them all with the same acuteness, spirit, facility, and perspicuity, and notwithstanding the intricacy and novelty of many of his speculations, it may be safely asserted that there is not an obscure sentence in all he wrote. *Those who run may read.* He wrote on history, grammar, law, politics, divinity, metaphysics, and natural philosophy—and those who perused his works fancied themselves entirely, and were in a great measure, masters of all these subjects. He was one of the very few who could make abstruse questions popular; and in this respect he was on a par with Paley with twenty times his discursiveness and subtlety. Paley's loose casuistry, which is his strong-hold and chief attraction, he got (every word of it) from Abraham Tucker's *Light of Nature*. A man may write fluently on a number of topics with the same pen, and that pen a very blunt one; but this was not Dr. Priestley's case; the studies to which he devoted himself with so much success and *éclat* required different and almost incompatible faculties. What for instance can be more distinct or more rarely combined than metaphysical refinement and a talent for experimental philosophy? The one picks up the grains, the other spins the threads of thought. Yet Dr. Priestley was certainly the best controversialist of his day, and one of the best in the language; and his chemical experiments (so curious a variety in a dissenting minister's pursuits) laid the foundation and often nearly completed the superstructure of most of the modern discoveries in that science. This is candidly and gratefully acknowledged by the French chemists, however the *odium theologicum* may slur over the obligation in this country, or certain fashionable lecturers may avoid the repetition of startling names. Priestley's *Controversy with Dr. Price* is a masterpiece not only of ingenuity, vigour, and logical clearness, but of verbal dexterity and artful evasion of difficulties, if any one need a model of this kind. His antagonist stood no chance with him in 'the dazzling

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fence of argument,' and yet Dr. Price was no mean man. We should like to have seen a tilting-bout on some point of scholastic divinity between the little Presbyterian parson and the great Goliath of modern Calvinism, Mr. Irving; he would have had his huge Caledonian boar-spear, his Patagonian club out of his hands in a twinkling with his sharp Unitarian foil. The bleary-eyed demon of vulgar dogmatism and intolerance would have taken his revenge by gnashing his teeth, rolling his eyes in a resistless phrensy, and denouncing as out of the pale of Christian charity a man who placed his chief comfort in this life in his hope of the next, and who would have walked firmly and cheerfully to a stake in the fulness of his belief of the Christian revelation. Out upon these pulpit demigorgons, 'Anthropophagi and men who eat each other,' to gratify the canine malice and inward gnawing of their morbid understandings, and worse than the infuriated savage, not contented to kill the body, would 'cast both body and soul into hell;' and unless they can see from their crazy thrones of spiritual pride and mountebank effrontery, the whole world cowering like one outstretched congregation in a level sea of bare heads and upturned wondering looks at their feet, prone and passive, and aghast under the thunders of their voice, the flashes of their eye—would snatch Heaven's own bolt to convert the solid globe into a sea of fire to torture millions of their fellow-creatures in for the slightest difference of opinion from them, or dissent from the authority of a poor, writhing, agonised reptile, who works himself up in imagination by raving and blasphemy into a sort of fourth person in the Trinity, and would avenge his mortified ambition, his moonstruck-madness, and ebbing popularity as the wrongs of the Most High!—'Nay, an you mouth, we'll rant as well as you!'—To return to Dr. Priestley and common sense, if it be possible to get down these from the height of *melo-dramatic* and apocalyptic orthodoxy. We do not place the subject of this notice in the first class of metaphysical reasoners either for originality or candour: but in boldness of inquiry, quickness, and elasticity of mind, and ease in making himself understood, he had no superior. He had wit too, though this was a resource to which he resorted only in extreme cases. Mr. Coleridge once threw a respectable dissenting congregation into an unwonted forgetfulness of their gravity, by reciting a description, from the pen of the transatlantic fugitive, of the manner in which the first man might set about making himself, according to the doctrine of the Atheists. Mr. Coleridge put no marks of quotation either before or after the passage, which was extremely grotesque and ludicrous; but imbibed the whole of the applause it met with in his flickering smiles and oily countenance. Dr. Priestley's latter years

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were unhappily embittered by his unavailing appeals to the French philosophers in behalf of the Christian religion ; and also by domestic misfortunes, to which none but a Cobbett could have alluded in terms of triumph. We see no end to the rascality of human nature ; all that there is good in it is the constant butt of the base and brutal.

### THE PROSE ALBUM : MAXIMS ON MANKIND

*The Monthly Magazine.*

*July, 1829.*

#### I

No person who is in love can ever be entirely persuaded that the passion is not reciprocal ; as no one who does not feel it ever believes that it is sincere in others.

#### II

Love is a fascination with some one striking excellence or indescribable grace, that supplies all other deficiencies, and fills the whole soul with a certain rapture. Hence the desire we have to find our passion unequivocally returned ; for, as from its very nature, everything connected with the beloved object is steeped in a sense of delight, and her every thought and feeling is supposed to be of the most exquisite kind, to be well thought of by her is necessarily to occupy the highest place in our own esteem : to be excluded from her favour and countenance, is to be turned out of Paradise.

#### III

Some have described love to be an exaggerated sense of excellence in another, without the chance or hope of making itself understood—a teasing pursuit of difficulty—a ‘ hunting of the wind, and worshipping a statue.’ This is, at most, a definition of unsuccessful love. It has been made a question, whether any woman would be proof against the real language of the heart, had it words to express itself ; or would not be won, were she assured of all that her despairing lover undergoes for her sake ? But the lover, from the strength of his own attachment, almost always believes that there is a secret sympathy between them ; that she knows what passes in his breast as well as in her own ; and that she holds out only from caprice ; and that she must at length yield.

#### IV

Love *at first sight* is only realising an imagination that has always haunted us ; or meeting with a face, or figure, or cast of expression in perfection that we have seen and admired in a less degree or in less

## THE PROSE ALBUM :

favourable circumstances a hundred times before. Our dream is out at last—Telemachus has discovered his Eucharis.

### V

Human life may be regarded as a succession of *frontispieces*. The way to be satisfied is never to look back. This is well expressed in his allegory of the *House of Pride*, by Spenser, a poet to whom justice will never be done till a painter of equal genius arises to embody the dazzling and enchanting creations of his pen.

### VI

Someone absurdly expressed a wish to be young again, *if he could carry his experience back with him to the outset of life*. But the worst old age is that of the mind.

### VII

There is no absurdity or extravagance that we can frame into words, or picture to the imagination, of which every day's experience would not afford a confirmation. The real caricatures are to be found in nature : no one dares describe them to the letter, for fear of being thought romantic. Our sympathy with, and consequent belief in, the folly and perversity of others, lag far behind the reality. Mounted on their *hobby-horsical* humours, they outstrip the wind ; and we lose sight of them before they get half-way to the devil. A metaphysical theory, a paradox, an hyperbole hobbles lamely after them : no tricks of style are a match for the tricks which the mind plays with itself : the passions draw distinctions and conclusions finer than the subtlest reason can detect.

### VIII

There is a habitual helplessness and sense of weakness that is not merely averse to bold and rash enterprises, but only feels secure when it is entangled with difficulties and hemmed in with doubts, and will not walk out of the prison-house of its fears, even when the doors are thrown open to it. It is not danger alone that frights the timid soul—the very imagination of success often chills it. It turns in haste and with apprehension from a prospect and a state so unnatural to it. While there is no hope, there is something to be uneasy about ; but to come to a termination of toil and trouble is, like coming to the edge of a precipice with nothing but an idle void beyond. It has fed on the disagreeable all its former time. How acquire a new sense late in life ? Prosperity sounds like insolence—encomium like insult.

## MAXIMS ON MANKIND

### IX

We may understand from this the contradiction which often appears in the character of notorious or reputed misers. To those who have scraped an immense fortune together by little and little, and have been accustomed, all their lives, to the most thrifty modes of subsistence, the launching out into luxury and expense must not only seem a sacrilegious waste of hard-earned gains, but, independently of this, must repel and shock all their early and most rooted prejudices and feelings. A man born to a fortune of half a million, and who has been used to dine on plate and have a dozen livery-servants standing behind his chair, cannot do without these necessary appendages of his wealth and of his imagination: but a man who has amassed that sum from nothing, must deem all this parade and ostentation mere folly, and almost a burlesque upon himself. The *miser* (as he is called) is therefore precluded by old associations and almost a natural instinct, from laying out his riches upon himself: they are either an encumbrance or a golden dream.

### X

It has been sometimes asked, 'Why should not West be equal to Raphael?' There are three answers to this question. First, it is a million to one against any man's being so. Secondly, if it were the fact, it is impossible that you who assume it, should know that it is so, unless you could be alive three hundred years hence to see whether West's works are then regarded as having made the same addition and given the same impulse to the art as Raphael's, three hundred years after his death. Could this be the case, and you then found that West's name, surviving the waves of opinion and the wrecks of time, still shone co-equal with Raphael's, a 'mighty land-mark to the latter times,' would you not say that this grand and disinterested result confirmed and added weight to your first rash judgment? Thirdly, if you *knew* that it was so, you could not *feel* in the same manner about it. Admiration is partly an affair of sympathy and prejudice. My enthusiasm glows the brighter and steadier for being kindled at a common flame and at an ancient and hallowed shrine. The grandeur is not merely in the cause or object, but in the effect; and fame is the shadow of genius, that reflects back its lustre and glory upon it. There is an atmosphere of time about intellectual objects, as well as of distance about visible ones, which gives them their peculiar refinement or expansion, and to deny or alter which is to invert the order of nature.

### XI

Grandeur of view consists in regarding things as they are seen in

## THE PROSE ALBUM

history, in their aggregate masses and results, and is equally remote from petty details and the grossness of prejudice.

### XII

A great wit and statesman said, that 'speech was given to man to conceal his thoughts.' So it might be said, that books serve as a screen to keep us from a knowledge of things.

### XIII

The diffusion of knowledge and literature, by increasing the number of pretenders, has lessened the distance between authors and readers; has made learning common and familiar; and given to reputation a temporary and ephemeral character. In the succession of new works, we cannot find time to read the old:—in the crowd of living competitors, we lose sight of the dead. The pretensions of rank and literature being each set aside and neutralised by the impertinent scrutiny of vulgar opinion, they *club* their stock between them, and strive to make a feeble stand that way. Hence the aristocracy of letters! An author no longer, in the silence of retreat, and in the dearth of criticism, appeals to posterity as a last resource, as in a flat and barren country we look on objects in the distant horizon: in the din and pressure of present opinions and contending claims, he must throw himself, like an actor at a fair, on the gaping throng about him, and seize, by the most speedy and obvious means, the noisy suffrages of his contemporaries. The poet, as of old, is not now, from rarity, regarded as a mystery, a wizard, a something whose privacy is not to be profaned by being encroached upon; every effort is made to throw down this partition wall, to rend asunder the veil of genius; and instead of being kept at a studious and awful distance, he must be brought near, must be shown as a *lion*, must be had out to dinner, or to an *AT HOME*; we must procure his autograph, get him to write his name in an *album*, and, if possible, come into personal contact with him, so as to mix him up with our daily impressions and admiring egotism. Thus the imaginary notion, the *divinæ particula auræ*, is lost under a heap of common qualities or peculiar defects; and only the shadow of a name is left. Nothing is fine but the *ideal*; or rather, excellence exists only by abstraction. If we wish to be delighted or to admire, we have no business to seek beyond what first excited our delight or admiration. Those who go in search of a cluster of perfections, or expect that because a man is superior in one thing, he is superior in all, only go in search of disappointment; or, in truth, hope to indemnify their self-love by the discovery that, except in some one particular, their idol is very much like themselves.

## MR. JEFFREY'S RESIGNATION

### MR. JEFFREY'S RESIGNATION OF THE EDITORSHIP OF THE *EDINBURGH REVIEW*

*The Atlas.*

June 21, 1829.

THIS gentleman has, as we have already stated, in consequence of his being appointed Dean of Faculty (which is the highest situation in the Scottish law), resigned the editorship of the *Edinburgh Review*, which he long held in honour and in splendour—whether as being incompatible with the duties or the dignity of his new elevation, does not exactly appear. Perhaps a little of both. Though in all probability Mr. Jeffrey's business as an advocate took up as much of his time as his office as a judge, yet the latter employment may seem more emphatically to imply *ease with dignity*; and though there can be little doubt that he has reached the height of his profession from the platform of literature, it is but natural to kick down the scaffolding after the building is erected, and to turn our backs on the inferior gradations by which we have risen to a wished-for and acknowledged eminence. Be this as it may, there is good reason to suppose that Mr. Jeffrey was not sorry to have an excuse for being *withdrawn* from a situation which he could not bring himself voluntarily to resign, and to which he clung chiefly from habit, and from the show of authority attached to it. The critical throne which he occupied was beset with difficulties, and had lost the charm of novelty; the sharp sword of literary justice was of late converted into a leaden mace; the striking pre-eminence which he had for a length of time assumed in politics, in wit, and in the *belles-lettres*, was lost or questioned; and a man (though a brave and honest one) may run from a 'falling Review' as well as from a falling house. The freedom, the boldness, and the acuteness displayed in the pages of the *Edinburgh Review*, exposed the editor to attacks from which neither private worth, literary talent, nor political integrity, could screen him; but the Dean of Faculty may be safe from the paltry shower of *privileged* calumny and abuse which incessantly annoyed 'little Frank Jeffrey,' though it could neither depress his spirit nor divert his course. There was, indeed, a magnanimity and a buoyancy of feeling about this excellent writer and man, which rendered him peculiarly insensible to all such mean and malevolent hostility: the wit he would readily have pardoned, had there been any—the malice he did not feel, and could scarcely credit, for he had none in his own breast. In the discharge of his critical vocation, or in a sportive mood, he had been accused of being severe and unmerciful himself; and he was more disposed than averse to attribute to a fit of the spleen, or a random impulse, the premeditated and systematic effects of servility, avarice, and envy. Gay, sanguine, full of resources,



## MR. JEFFREY'S RESIGNATION OF THE

he could not sink into the gloomy fanatic or complaining misanthrope ; but frequently exercised his ingenuity and his good-nature in suggesting apologies for his antagonists, the novelty and candour of which would equally have surprised them, could they have been overheard. Mr. Jeffrey was not a mere author, who, having shot his pedantic, long-prepared bolt, stands unarmed, defenceless, a mark for the shafts of the enemy ; in conversation he was ready and sparkling ; in court fluent and full of topics ! So that he was always a match for those who chose to meddle with him, could give and take smart blows, courted the encounter which he had no reason to fear, entering on it with a gay unconcern, and from knowing professionally the various aspects of truth, and the weak sides of human nature, he was sometimes contented to come off with a drawn-battle. Constitutionally pleased, active, vigorous, upright in his intentions, successful in his pursuits, he moved in a bright and busy sphere of his own, and was not prone to dwell on the dark circle of malice and falsehood which was attempted to be drawn around him. He nestled in his classic retirement of Craig-crook, without casting an envious or angry glance at Abbotsford, where ' the base politician ' and mighty enchanter dwelt ! The tone of Mr. Jeffrey's politics received a tincture not only from the naturally quick and restless character of his mind, but from the habits of his legal profession. He took the middle path, and kept it. A lawyer is least of all men liable to fall into the error of the two knights described in *Don Quixote*, who, coming to a shield painted of different colours, one contended that it was black, and the other that it was white. The lawyer is obliged to turn the shield of truth round on both sides ; and if from this he becomes sceptical or lukewarm, he is not apt to be extravagant or intolerant. His versatility of opinion is in some sort guarantee for the consistency of his principles, as they are not in the first instance taken up blindly, and on trust, or from mere passion. The editor of the *Edinburgh Review* has always been a moderate Whig, with certain inflections ; and what is to his eternal honour, he became a more staunch Whig as Whiggism itself tottered, and a bolder advocate of liberty after liberty became a bye-word. This was no atonement for certain party-peccadillos with the *Westminster* reviewers, who care for nothing but their own offensive dogmas, and hate the foes of freedom and its friends alike ! A more marked vacillation is observable in the history of the opinions of the celebrated northern journal in matters of taste and criticism. There was the same aptitude and openness to conviction, as new styles and authors arose, without the same settled standard, or previously arranged topics to appeal to. The pages of the *Edinburgh Review*, therefore, toss and tumble about a little in this point of

## EDITORSHIP OF *EDINBURGH REVIEW*

view, as the feelings of successive moments and moods of mind agitate them; sometimes the school of the age of Elizabeth, sometimes that of Queen Anne, sometimes the classical, sometimes the romantic, prevails or kicks the beam, according to the inspiration of the subject, or the humour of the writer; for the editor (be it known to the uninstructed) is not always his own contributor, and hardly exercises a *veto*. Still there was a general bias and direction, favourable to the clear, the polished, the manly, the intelligible, and looking cold askance on the puny, the affected and obscure. If Mr. Wordsworth was blamed, it was for his puerilities; if Barry Cornwall was praised, it was for his beauties. At all times, whether it was praise or blame that was bestowed, ample reasons were given with it; the critic entered into the arena with the author to support or grapple with him; no man could complain that his cause was condemned unheard. What led more than any other circumstance to the *decline* or diminished popularity of the *Edinburgh Review* was its *monotony*. The real objection was not that it had become a collection of pamphlets (for that it has always been), but that it was a collection of the same pamphlets. A monopoly of it had got into the hands of noble authors and parliamentary critics, who reviewed their own speeches on the corn laws, the poor laws, education, or the Catholic question, and repeated themselves without mercy, setting their faces against all interlopers who had not a diploma from the senate or the Bar as *infra dignitatem*. Consistency and gravity are good things, uniformity and dulness are bad. One heavy article on political economy may serve as ballast to lighter matter, but why should there be five or six following one another? This makes the town no longer on tip-toe for the arrival of the *Edinburgh Review*—it comes up like a coal-barge, and not like a pleasure-yacht. Mr. Jeffrey was elbowed in his seat by a number of his coadjutors, who acted with a torpedo touch on his mercurial spirits, and lay heavy on the reading public. M—— is himself ‘a load to sink a navy.’ The sprightly and highly-gifted editor had perhaps lost some of his original pith and unction; and though he might say the same things, he said them more languidly and reluctantly every time. He not unfrequently wrote his most elaborate articles in court in the intervals of pleading, and stopped at the bottom of the page in the middle of a sentence. He would have broken his critical sceptre in two, but that it would have seemed a defeat! The Dean of Faculty receives the laurelled critic in his arms; and the loss of power is accompanied with an increase of honours. Those who know Mr. Jeffrey at a distance admire him: those who are better acquainted with him love and respect him; all will be glad of a distinction grateful to his feelings, and which has been merited neither by servility nor

## AUTOGRAPHS

faction, but by an union of firmness with moderation. His readers alone will miss his brilliant turns and forked style.

### AUTOGRAPHS

*The Atlas.*

June 28, 1829.

A COLLECTION of printed autographs appeared the other day, with a learned disquisition on the subject in an Edinburgh journal, which is the hot-bed of these sort of revived mummeries. We do not mean that there may not be *something* in the handwriting as indicative of the character; but in proportion as the connexion is trifling or doubtful, they exaggerate, and make it out to be everything. The fault of all such reasoning is, not that they are wholly without foundation, but that they rest on a partial and slight one; for the indication is but one thing, and the character is not one but a hundred things, and expresses itself in as many different and often contradictory ways. If the human mind or body were in perfect harmony and unison, then from any one thing being given we might probably infer all the rest: but this is not so. There is an old saying: 'The devil to meet, an angel to follow.' One part of the face may express sense and virtue; another be mean and idiotical. The voice may contradict the eye, and yet both have to do with character. A man may have a fine head, placed on an infirm body: *ex pede Herculem* will not apply to everyone. There is ground to suppose that Pope's bodily weakness and deformity had some influence on his poetry; but are we therefore to argue that every hump-back implies *The Rape of the Lock*, or *The Epistle to Abaelard*? So the hand-writing may be affected by the impatience, timidity, lightness or firmness, simplicity or conceit of the characters; but then how many other considerations intervene! A man may have lost his right hand and be compelled to write with his left; this would hardly be a test. But his hand may be ill-formed, or he may have been ill-taught, or he may not be in the habit of writing, or he may write too much and in a hurry, so as to spoil a good hand. He may write a law-hand or an Italian-hand. Again, the same person may write different hands at different periods of his life, a small, cramp-hand at one time, and a large, clear, liberal one at another. Perhaps this may have to do with the flow of the ideas and the facility of composition; but that does not appear in evidence, nor would it bear out any general verdict on character. The circumstance being given, the hand-writing might be accounted for; but it does not imply the circumstances. The expression of the face, on the contrary, is stamped by the circumstances—it betrays the history of the mind, though not without some allowances. Many of the autographs in the work alluded to are unlike: the person

## ENGLISH CHARACTERISTICS

has been asked to write his name, which is very different from his ordinary way of writing: it may make it better or worse. Lamb's signature is precise and timid: in general he writes as if he would spurt the ink over the table. Leigh Hunt's and Southey's are alike, and so are the men. They are elegant pragmatists in different ways. Jeffrey's autograph seems written in glass with the point of a diamond: his ordinary hand is minute, shuffling, undecipherable. Coleridge's is very unlike what it used to be; but it is infirm and helpless as an infant's. This expresses a part of his character, but surely not the whole—his want of will, not his excess of thought. Sir Walter's resembles Wordsworth's. Both are plain, downright, rustic hands; but there is no intimation of the subtle refinements of the one, nor of the unwearied and unrivalled flights of the other. The Duke of Wellington's hand (which is no better than his face, and the worst in the set), is commented upon by the Scotch critic with all the confidence of *ex post facto* evidence and the inspiration of *second-sight*. His long *l*'s denote the great 'led-captain' of the age, his tall *t*'s the triumphs over Whigs and Tories, his *i*'s without dots convey a great moral lesson, his *W* stands for Waterloo. He really writes a very gawky, booby, school-boy's hand; or the aspiring letters might pass for grenadiers, the true expounders of his genius and his success.

## ENGLISH CHARACTERISTICS

*The Atlas.*

July 5, 1829.

THE English are the only people to whom the term *blackguard* is peculiarly applicable—by which I understand a reference of everything to violence and a contempt for the feelings and opinions of others. It may be affirmed of them, with few exceptions, from the highest to the lowest, whether gentle or simple, they would all rather use *force* to gain their point than have no occasion for it, and regard good-will and complaisance as perfectly insipid and out of character. They think it French grimace and affectation. A common *blackguard* in the street runs up against you if he can, to show he is as good as you; and asks you if you complain, how can you help yourself? And the *fine gentleman* at the play (altering nothing but the name) enters the boxes with a menacing air, as if prepared to force his way through some obstacle, which he habitually anticipates and resents beforehand. A true Englishman, on coming into a coffee-room, looks round to see if the company are good enough for him, to know if his place is not taken, or if he cannot turn others out of theirs, and is not easy unless he can give himself supercilious airs the whole time he is eating his beef-steak, towards someone worse dressed than himself, or else assume a vastly

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significant and independent spirit in answer to the smallest appearance of advantage over him. There is always much 'internal oath,' preparatory knitting of the brows, implied clenching of the fists, and imaginary shouldering of affronts and grievances going on in the mind of an unsophisticated Englishman. The clown resorts to club-law—it is a *word and a blow* with him; the citizen comforts himself that he has the law on his side, and that the magistrate has a spite at the delinquent. Everything is done *against the grain*. Even the laughter-loving Venuses of our isle would much rather lend their gallants a box on the ear than accept an offer of love or money from them; and it is the prospect of unlimited gin, of calling names, of doing nothing, and thrusting their hard, red hands into white kid gloves, which fills the rank of this profession to the overflowing of our streets and theatres nightly. These half-naked vestals, planted against the pillars in the lobbies, or marching up and down arm-in-arm with *Tom-and-Jerry* admirers, smart book-keepers, or lawyers' clerks, are the triumphs of English modesty and manners. A peace-officer in this country is the only person who refuses to lift a finger, and proceeds with infinite caution and repugnance in suppressing the natural growth and glory of the soil, *rows* and actions of assault and battery. If a fellow in the street makes an outrageous noise, and threatens to knock anyone down, the watchmen, in pure sympathy and admiration of his prowess, let him pass: if a poor woman falls down in a fit through intoxication or want, they have her to the watch-house in a moment. They have no compassion for the weak and helpless; their heads are full of blows and bludgeons. Such is our love of liberty; such the spirit of our constitution and our clime! If this subject be harping on a grievance, at least it is not an imaginary one.

## PHRENOLOGICAL FALLACIES

*The Atlas.*

July 5 and 12, 1829.

'It is the very error of the moon:  
She comes more near the earth than she was wont,  
And makes men mad.'

1. THE phrenologist thinks to give an easy and practical solution of the phenomena of the human mind by making out a map of the different organs, and laying his finger on each of them in succession, saying 'This is anger, this is benevolence, this is poetry, this is prose'; so that in 'this feeling disputation' he seems to come in contact with the thoughts and faculties of the soul, and can no longer doubt that he sees and touches its real manifestations and most hidden mysteries. So far from it, that the different *bumps*, to which he gives the name of

## PHRENOLOGICAL FALLACIES

organs, are only so many *tumuli* in which the thoughts must for ever 'lie buried,' and draw an effectual mask or skull-cap over the head, which, by substituting a gross and positive symbol for a refined and complicated essence, prevents all further inquiry into what passes in our own minds, or attempts to reduce it to general principles. The phrenologist deceives himself as well as others. That which recommends phrenology to the vulgar and renders it a fashion, *viz.*—its presenting a handle to the senses, and a *gamut* which may be learnt by rote without any reasoning about it, is in fact its bane, and ought to be its condemnation with the sober and thinking. It is an old division of popularity with the quacks—'Do you take the wise, and let me have the fools!' Phrenology is much such an elucidation or *revelation* of the nature and character of the human mind as if Mr. De Ville were to cover over a striking bust with plaster of Paris, and write on the outside 'underneath is the nose, here are the eyes, below is the chin'—the place and number of the features would be given, the rest would be a blank. Phrenology is the grave or epitaph of the understanding.

2. The phrenologist considers his science as greatly adding to, and an improvement on, physiognomy; whereas it is directly opposed to, and absolutely overturned by, it. For instance, say that the *organ of destructiveness* is uniformly found in the murderer according to the new theory: the protruding jaw-bone, the under-hung chin are no less proverbially and notoriously indicative of the same violent and self-willed character, according to common observation. But there is no extraordinary or correspondent development of the cerebral organ of murder or ferociousness under the jaw-bone or projecting chin, for there is no brain to develope. Therefore the size or fulness of the brain can have nothing to do with the characteristic form of the face where it is not; and there is no proof (by parity of reasoning), that it has anything to do with the form of the head, *where it is*. The upper part of the face, the forehead, temples, eyebrows, express certain mental dispositions and operations according to the physiognomical system, and the lower, *viz.* the nose, eyes, mouth, chin, do so no less. But according to the organic system, the latter can have no meaning, and lead to no conclusion, for there is no portion of the brain under them to expand or raise them up. Shall we, therefore, to please these men of science, reduce one-half of the face, which has been so long and so truly regarded as a book of observation and mirror of the mind, to a *caput mortuum*, an idle appendage of the skull, and 'knowledge at that entrance quite shut out'? Either the lower part of the face is no index of capacity and character, or the meaning and force of the upper part do not depend, or need not be supposed to depend, on the lumps and pressure of the brain contained immediately beneath it.

## PHRENOLOGICAL FALLACIES

3. The phrenologist speaks of his science as demonstrable ; whereas it is occult, and set apart for quackery. Everyone can see and judge of the face, for it is open to common observation, and we are habitually influenced by the expression, whether we are aware of it or no. But it is not so with the top of the head, which is hid by the hair, and tells no tales till the phrenologist claps his ungracious hand upon it, or takes a cast before dissection. We, therefore, lie at the mercy of his veracity or accuracy. It is an undiscovered country, of which the learned reports what he pleases. We cannot verify his statements by our own feelings ; experience keeps no check upon him.

4. The phrenologist thinks to account in a more pointed and palpable manner for the different faculties and dispositions of the mind from the distinctions of *place* and *quantity* alone, whereas these of themselves absolutely explain nothing. If an organ in one part of the head be uncommonly large, it expresses *caution* in an extraordinary degree ; if a similar striking projection exist in another part, it expresses a high degree of *courage* or *combateness*. But how can the size of the organ account for the difference of character or dispositions, if there be no difference in the texture or *quality* of the brain in these two organs ? But if there be a difference in this latter respect, as of greater hardness or softness, feebleness or vigour of tone, then this difference of quality will of itself produce a difference of character without referring to the circumstances of quantity at all, which can at best only come in to aid the other. We find great *chuckle-heads* without any meaning, and huge bumps and projections on the forehead, which only resemble obstinate tumours. Thought uses a finer language—a glance of the eye, the play about the muscles of the mouth.

5. Again, phrenology professes to account for the difference of talent and disposition in a simple and unequivocal manner by making a *division of labour*, or distributing the different sorts of cleverness and capacity respectively among the different organs ; but it falls into the very error it wishes to avoid. Genius, say the phrenologists, is not one thing, but many things ; there is no general capacity for all kinds of excellence, but one person has a turn for poetry, another for mathematics, and so on. If, therefore, ‘still to follow nature be the rule,’ we must suppose an organ for poetry, and an organ for mathematics, instead of a head for both ; which is nowhere to be found. So far, so good ; but is poetry one thing any more than genius ; or is there such a thing as a general and equal capacity for all sorts of poetry ? Is the talent for the sublime, the humorous, the pathetic, lodged in the same place and person ? Does the same projection of the skull denote an epigram or an epic poem ? Was the *Paradise Lost* or the *Twopenny Post Bag*, written with the same organ, any more than by the same

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pen? Or are there as many different organs of poetry as there are poems and poets in the world? This is endless and absurd. There is a general capacity or principle of communication in the mind; if you come to particulars, they are infinite.

6. Then if you say that the different sorts of poetry depend upon the proportion and combination of several organs, this is going back to the old theory of general faculties, variously modified by each other, or by circumstances. The peculiar faculty is no longer shut up in a given organ like a *Jack in a box*. Thus, if sublime poetry is owing to a union of the organs of *veneration* and *imitation*, then either the impression of the object is made in one place, and the effect produced by it or the admiration it inspires is going on in another, where there is no object present to admire; or the first imitative impression is transferred to the organ of veneration, where it begins to ferment, to swell, and expand into wonder and sublimity, in which case the latter organ performs a double function of imitation and veneration—then why not suppose the same thing to take place at first, or to be the immediate consequence of an impression of a given object on a brain or a percipient substance of a certain nature, and susceptible (without the wretched subterfuge of a division into parts) both of receiving sensations and of being affected by them in a more powerful and lofty, or in a weaker and more mechanical, manner? This combined result must take place at last in some common emporium of thought and feeling: the organic system only removes the difficulty or multiplies it. The effect of objects on the imagination may be compared to the undulations produced by throwing a stone into the surface of a lake: the sinking of the stone is not owing to the properties of one portion of the water, and the undulation to a machinery placed in another—both are simultaneous and unavoidable results of the liquidness and uninterrupted volume of the body of water. Modern philosophers do not borrow, even from matter, analogies which might serve to illustrate the mind, but only those which distort and degrade it. But all poetry does not tend to enlarge and elevate. Wit lightens and diminishes, as imagination enforces and aggrandises. It would be hard to shut up Homer and Waller in the same pew or compartment of the brain. The latter would be squeezed to death. But it is not a particular organ in which they are unlike; the whole head, if we can trust to tradition and the evidence of our senses, is different.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There is said to be an *organ of colour* and an *organ of form*; and it is true some painters have excelled in colouring, and some in drawing. But upon the same principle there ought to be an organ for *light and shade*, for *clearness*, for *truth*, for *richness* of colouring, for *grace*, and *grandeur* of form, and so on without end, for all these are found separate and in different proportions. What man alive would say that the various powers and functions of the hand depend on the different *knuckles*



## PHRENOLOGICAL FALLACIES

7. The phrenologists confound all metaphysics. For instance, they have an *organ of form* and an *organ of comparison*, as if there could be a perception of form without comparison. Can anyone see that lines are parallel or of equal length without comparing them together? If the particular organ of form includes the general power of comparison, what is the use of the organ of comparison generally? If no organ can meddle with its neighbour, or with the concerns of the mind at large, there can neither be any general organ or general faculty, which is contrary to common sense.

8. It is perfectly intelligible that there should be separate and independent organs for the impressions of different senses, as it is perfectly unintelligible that there should be separate and independent organs for the joint operations and *mixed modes* of the mind. After original impressions, almost everything in human life depends on their association. The pleasure we take in a rose depends on form, colour, smell, and many other particulars; we listen to the notes of a thrush with delight, from the circumstance not only of sound, but of seasons, of solitude, the recollections of a country-life, and of our own. The world, the mind, is an endless *miscellany*. But there is no organ of association in the phrenological table, nor any symbol to explain its varieties.<sup>1</sup> Some persons accumulate impressions all their lives; others are nearly taken up with the present moment. Must not this be owing to the greater or less tenaciousness of the fibres of the brain or perceptions of the mind generally? In Lord Byron's poetry we have 'no note of time'; all is reducible to first and striking impressions. In Mr. Wordsworth's, on the contrary, time—the recurrence of impressions—is everything; the object itself is almost indifferent.

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(learnedly designated), and not on the general frame and texture of the nerves and muscles of the hand, variously modified by habit and nature? If the different faculties resided in distinct and independent organs, there would be no reason why the most opposite faculties should not spring up and co-exist together—why the same man should not be poet and mathematician, a coward and a hero, &c. But if we suppose the difference of capacity and character to arise from the same substance differently modified, then one quality naturally precludes or induces an indisposition to another, as hardness precludes flexibility, accuracy freedom, the grave the gay, &c. Hence the wonder when one man unites contrary extremes in perfection, as we see in Shakespeare's poetry or in Garrick's acting. Once more, dividing the organ of painting in two as if the lineal separation, without any change of essential quality, produced the distinctions of form and colour, is like cutting a Yorkshire pudding in two, and calling the one half *custard*, and the other *plum-cake*. It is a fine nomenclature for the meridian of the *Modern Athens*, where men, from a singular setness and pomposity of understanding, walk the streets encumbered with a system, and surrounded by a *cortège* of tall, opaque words, instead of their 'auld-world' bullies and caterans.

<sup>1</sup> There cannot be a detached and arbitrary organ of association. The principle is inherent in every act of the mind. The idea of an oak-tree necessarily coheres together.

## PHRENOLOGICAL FALLACIES

Now is it reasonable to explain this from the structure of a particular local organ, when it is obvious that all their ideas, all that they saw, heard, and felt, was affected by the same bias, and amenable to the same law? There is no account of general character, either in relation to understanding or disposition, in the new code. There are general characters of sprightliness, of gravity, of voluptuousness, of severity, of artfulness, of fickleness, of gloom, of indifference, of impulse, of calculation, &c. in individuals, in nations, in men and women—shall we say that all these go for nothing, because there is no room for them in the geographical chart of the human understanding? For example, women in general have more softness and flexibility both of mind and body than men—they have not the same strength and perseverance, but they take their revenge in *tact* and delicacy: shall we suppose this marked and universal difference which runs through the whole frame and through every thought and action of life, to proceed from a particular bump or excrescence of the skull, and not to be inherent in the texture and substance of the principle (whatever it may be) which feels, and thinks, at all times, and in all circumstances?

9. The arrangement of the system, even if it were true and sound, is crude and bad. For instance, there is an organ of *destructiveness* and an organ of *constructiveness* close together: the two things seem opposite. They are both the same organ, that of *power* or *purpose*, differently modified by more or less patience, capacity, &c. The prudent chin, the formidable protrusion of the jaw-bone, are prolongations of them. The organ of *self-love*, and the organ of *veneration*, of that which admires nothing but itself, and that which admires everything but itself, are next-door neighbours on the top of the skull, and scarcely distinguishable. What then draws the moral and metaphysical line? Once more, we insist that the broad face and high cheek-bone indicate circumspection and the Scotch character, as much as any organ of *caution* can do. The phrenologists mistake the ends of the lever for the length of it; the brain projects because it is full—it is not full because it projects.

10. Lastly, if the facts were true, however anomalous or unaccountable, we must assent to them, and explain them as well as we could afterwards. In all the instances we do not know, the theory and the individual cases *tally* wonderfully; in all those that we *do* know, they are constantly at variance. Dr. Spurzheim found a want of the organ of *ideality* in Mr. Coleridge; and Dr. Combe pronounces Burke, the murderer, to be a pious and benevolent man. So much for faith in a system said to be founded on fact.

## THE CHAMPIONS OF PHRENOLOGY

### THE CHAMPIONS OF PHRENOLOGY

*The Atlas.*

July 19, 1829.

A CORRESPONDENT who signs himself 'Justitia' denies the justice of our late remarks upon phrenological fallacies, and undertakes to point out our errors. We readily receive his commentary, because we never knew a phrenologist who did not overturn his theory in attempting to defend it.

Justitia says that :

'Though the phrenologist does not speak to actions, yet he certainly considers the various organs as distinct *powers*, and as the only legitimate source through which the mind can show itself, regarding the brain as the medium, not the mind itself.'

This is a most distracting paralogism. The organs are powers, not symbols of powers, through which the mind shows itself; yet nevertheless the brain is the medium of the mind. If the phrenologist cannot speak to actions—that is to say, if he admit that a man's character as developed in his actions may be totally different from his character as developed in the organs—of what avail is his science?

Again :

'Phrenology is perfectly independent of physiognomy, except as a secondary influence; for though physiognomy may give a particular form and expression to the countenance, and thereby assist in delineating particular habits of mind, yet the source of influence is derived from the brain alone, and is in reality the result of phrenology.'

We overlook the illogical construction of this passage for the sake of arriving at our correspondent's purpose, which is, that the expression of the face is derived from the primary and permanent seat of the passions in the bumps of the skull. This fallacy answers itself. The expression of the face is subject to all the variations of feeling and accidental emotion, and is heightened or depressed by circumstances. The skull is not. How can the ever-changing spring from the immutable?

After a confusing argument to show that 'though the power of any organ is denoted by its size, yet the phrenologist does not regard the size as the power itself,' Justitia proceeds :

'If you can produce a sound logician with small reasoning powers; a faithful and accurate traveller or historian with small perceptive faculties; a cautious and reserved individual with small caution; and a man who, with a small organ of benevolence, feels himself actuated by this feeling to better the welfare of society; if these facts can be adduced, they will more powerfully denounce the falsity of this science,

## THE UTILITARIAN CONTROVERSY

than by making false assertions, and supporting them by ridicule and ignorance.'

The negligent diction in which Justitia indulges, requires amendment. We could not produce a sound logician with small reasoning powers; nor an accurate historian with small perceptive faculties; nor a cautious individual with small caution; for the same reason that we could not produce a black man with a white skin. But we could produce all these persons *without the organs denoting those powers and faculties*: and this is the main ground of our objection to the assumptions of phrenology. In Burke, the murderer, the organ of destructiveness was in its absolute size smaller than thirty-seven out of fifty crania in Sir William Hamilton's collection; and it was relatively and absolutely below the average, while his organ of benevolence was absolutely and relatively above the average. Hare's case was still more at variance with the dogmas of phrenology; and it is stated by Mr. Stone, that the best developed organ in his head was *ideality*, which was larger than the same organ in one of our most distinguished living poets, as also in the heads of Sheridan, Sterne, Canning, Voltaire, and Edmund Burke. There are a thousand instances on record, which we have neither space nor inclination to quote, in which this science has been contradicted by facts; although its professors, with a mockery of all honesty and consistency, say, that if one single case can be brought in evidence against it, they will abandon their theory. One might as well quote the Koran to a Cossack as truth to a phrenologist. He has an easy loophole of evasion through which he slips, and then turns round upon you again with his affectation of sincerity, and a demand for fresh facts. The subtle distinction between truth and error is not often clear in metaphysical discussions; but if the phrenologists were to substitute a general power for their subdivisions of the mental faculties, we might then meet them in a more tangible and rational argument. As it is, so long as they insist upon cutting up the moral capacity into wiredrawn departments, there is no reducing them to a definition, or fighting them with the weapons of common sense.

### THE UTILITARIAN CONTROVERSY THE EDINBURGH AND WESTMINSTER REVIEWS

*The Atlas.*

July 19, 1829.

THERE is a controversy at present raging with all the fury of ancient polemics between these two critical and philosophical journals respecting the *useful* and the *agreeable*. The *Westminster* contends that there is nothing useful but what is disagreeable, and exemplifies its doctrine

## THE UTILITARIAN CONTROVERSY

in its mode of proving it, being 'itself the great sublime it draws'; the *Edinburgh*, with better taste and manners, maintains that the agreeable forms part of the useful; and we confess we incline to the same side of the question, if common sense is not to be left quite out of it. One party insists that there should be none but baker's shops: the other that there should also be a sprinkling of pastry-cooks. A child can answer that question. If we, who own to having 'a sweet tooth still in our heads,' should be charged with being no better than grown children, we shall sit down very easy under that imputation, having our answer ready whenever it is required from us. The *Edinburgh*, be it observed, does not, in compliance with the fractious humours and fanciful prejudices of that spoiled child, the world, wish to destroy all the baker's-shops, and convert them into pastry-cooks; no, the 'solid men of Edinburgh' know too well for that, and with a liberality of spirit and an enlargement of view worthy of them, they say there must be both—a loaf and a cake; it is the sour pedagogues of the *Westminster* school who have all the bigotry and intolerance on their side, who set their faces against puffed paste and the delights of human kind; and in this Act of Uniformity of theirs, which has not yet passed into a law, reducing all the varieties of the confectionery art to the homely level of the quartern loaf, we hold them to be wrong upon their own showing. The way in which the *row* or feud began was briefly this:—There are two sorts of things in this world; namely, those which are pleasant in themselves, and without a reference to consequences, and those which being either unpleasant or indifferent in themselves, yet lead to some good or advantage in the end, and are approved of on this account. People have consented to call the one of these the *agreeable* and the other the *useful*; and there is no great difficulty in comprehending or applying the terms. The difference is as plain as that between a kitchen-garden and a flower-garden; there are (we know) parks and pleasure-grounds as well as arable and pasture-land; again, no one thinks of dining on a rose or smelling to a potatoe, however useful a root this may be according to every one but Mr. Cobbett. But what the understanding distinguishes, the will and passions confound, or do all they can towards it. There are people to be found with very limited faculties and overbearing dispositions, who will not let you alone, and insist on referring everything to their own want of ideas as a sovereign and infallible standard. Because they have no smell themselves, they will not smell to a rose, but swear that a potatoe is best both to eat and smell to; they will neither allow you butter to your bread nor salt to your meat; because they have no sense of enjoyment themselves, they hate and envy and would put an end to whatever gives others pleasure; and define the *useful*

## THE UTILITARIAN CONTROVERSY

(to pamper their own narrow egotism and ill-temper), by excluding the *agreeable* from it as a thing abhorrent from their natures and which they have not patience to think or hear of. As it would not do, however, to set up their own private phlegm or spleen as the law of the land, and to say to others—‘I am a very disagreeable, ill-conditioned person, do you be just like me’—it is made a matter that concerns the state, and religion or philosophy is called in for this purpose. Thus the cynics of old, hating dress and finery, said you should be dirty, because *the mind was to be cultivated before the body*. Then the ascetics and monks took up the same atrabilious principle, and maintained that it was sinful and would endanger an immortal soul to eat, drink, or be merry—you were neither to laugh, dance, nor sing—the sound of a fiddle was perdition, a ball or an assembly was the devil’s meeting—you were to have a cloud upon your brow, gloom and remorse at your heart—you were to marry or live single solely for the glory of God, for the smallest pleasure in any carnal act or natural sensation was the worshipping the creature and renouncing the creator (out upon the folly and hypocrisy united!) and thus you were enclosed in a purgatory of horrors and privations made of the most trifling and innocent amusements, which, for no other reason than because you like them, the votaries of spiritual pride and presumption resent and denounce as incurring the loss of heaven and the vengeance of the Most High. One might suppose that human absurdity and impertinence had been exhausted in creeds and sects of superstition, and that the old Adam had had his day; when lo! up start the *Utilitarians* (following in the wake of the Calvinists and Papists), and prove that the *Whole Duty of Man* consists in his doing no one thing that can give either himself or any other mortal the smallest conceivable satisfaction; are seized with the same *hydrophobia* of music, painting, and poetry, as their pious predecessors (which being the finest and most delightful things in the world, all fanatics make the same *set* at them as a bull is enraged at scarlet)—get you under absolute and unremitting control, by substituting the cant-phrase of the *good of the whole* for the misused appeal to the *glory of God*, and cut you out of the possibility of a single individual enjoyment under pretence of the public welfare, just as the morbid recluse of centuries past cancelled and annihilated all the comforts of this life under pain of damnation in the next. Is not the parallel complete? Let anyone who doubts it read the *Westminster* (we would impose impossible tasks on no man) and go and hear Mr. Irving preach, who is the Goliath of the antiquated system, and keeps up a collateral ‘coil and pudder o’er our heads,’ and then say whether, with a change in the professional jargon, they do not agree to a tittle? Will Mr. Irving let you go to Covent-garden or Drury-lane?

## THE UTILITARIAN CONTROVERSY

No more will the *Westminster*, unless Mrs. Chatterley should act, 'who in herself sums all delight, so absolute she seems' to Mr. P——. Will Mr. Irving send you to the opera to hear sounds from Madame Pasta 'that might create a soul under the ribs of death?' No more will the *Westminster*! P——, poor fellow! dare no more show his face there than his own Sir Ourang-Outang! Will Mr. Irving give a good word to Thomas Moore, or to Lord Byron, any more than the *Westminster*? Nay, it has something to say in favour of the last, because he was a *Radical* and not an Irishman (magnificent comprehensiveness of soul!) Does the *Westminster* adorn its pages with descriptions of pictures or statues, any more than Mr. Irving hangs his whitewashed chapel with them? But the Caledonian preacher, with his sharp-sounding voice, quotes Shakespeare; and the *Westminster Review*, with its meagre understanding and *white leather face*, 'can see nothing in him.' Mr. Irving does not launch out as he might with infinite *gusto* and a sea of intonation into *Old Mortality* and the Scotch novels; and the *Westminster* only brings them in to snarl at and damn them. What then is the result of all this? The *Westminster* may be d—ned! One thing is certain, that one Calvinistic divine turns human life into a very comfortless lodging with only the fixtures, a few moveables, and no ornaments, because it is an inn on the road to another. The *Westminster* jobbers do the same thing, because, if they were to stay to fit up a single apartment, they could not run up the same number of skeletons of houses for people to be uncomfortable in. The controversy, in short, lies in a nut-shell. The *Westminster* critics, like all sophists, avail themselves of an ambiguity of language. The word *useful* has a vulgar and practical sense, in which it stands opposed to what is *agreeable*, and implies a negation of it. But a word is wanted to express whatever is good or desirable generally, whether in itself or in its consequences; and for the sake of peace and brevity it is agreed that the word *useful* shall stand for this. But having got this definition established, in which the *agreeable* is included, they then take advantage of the sound to fall back upon the original and mechanical sense, from which the *agreeable* is *excluded*, and obtain a clandestine verdict against polite literature and the arts as frivolous and contemptible, or pitiable things. But if the value and importance of these to human happiness be pointed out, then they say—'Oh! yes, that is very true, but it is no objection to our system of utility for whatever gives pleasure makes a part of it,' and accordingly patronise literature and art for the moment, but soon return, with canine appetite, to their vomit again. They either therefore mean nothing, or they mean ill. The editor of the *Standard* complains that the *Edinburgh Review*, in overturning a number of things, substituted nothing for them; but observes that

## THE UTILITARIAN CONTROVERSY

the *Westminster* has not fallen into this error, since it has brought forward the principle of 'the greatest happiness to the greatest number.' This principle could be new to no one but a writer who seriously believes that 'millions were made for one.' All the rest of the world were agreed in it long ago. The only question is as to the mode or means. If the *Westminster* reviewers insist that a creature like man is to make the good of the whole not only the remote and ultimate, but the immediate rule of his conduct; that he is to have no other feeling, thought, or motive, but the public good, no attachment to individuals, no indulgence of his senses, no scope to his imagination, no relaxation from care, they are more mad or stupid than we thought them. We do not wonder in that case that the *Standard* prefers them as antagonists to the *Edinburgh*; <sup>1</sup> but we are sorry to see it include the *Examiner* in the same compliment. *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*. These gentlemen might as well say, that the best employment of our time would be by never going to sleep, or the best use of our food would be to starve ourselves. It would be the old story over again, of living entirely to the glory of God, which does not consist with human nature. We have other organs, besides those of piety or benevolence. One of the school admiring the trees in Kensington-gardens, was rebuked for this waste of time and piece of sentimentality by the grand master, who was surprised he should think of anything but the good of the whole; but the latter (a Cornish youth) turned round, and asked, 'If we were to have no pleasure in any one thing, what was the good of the whole to consist in?' But whether right or wrong, wise or foolish, we must object *in toto* to the novelty of this system; nor can we imagine why it is applauded under the auspices of Mr. Bentham and the *Westminster Review*, when it is scouted in every other quarter. Mr. Godwin broached it (root and branch) thirty years ago—it 'drooped, faded, rotted, stunk, died, and was trod under foot' soon after. The ingenious and eloquent author of *Political Justice* lives obscure, retired in Gower-place; nobody visits, nobody inquires after, nobody praises him. But his theory flourishes in Queen-square, Westminster; while all the world agree to puff Mr. Bentham's writings, which nobody can read. Mr. Bentham is the old woman of our time who dreams he is delivered of a succession of novelties, like *Mrs. Tofts* (the old woman in Hogarth) a hundred years ago. Is it that the principle of UTILITY, the grand modern discovery, is handsomely endowed in Westminster, which it is nowhere else? That it has its patrons, because it has its

<sup>1</sup> The *Standard* says, it gives incalculable advantages to have to do with such adversaries. It also says, the new system provides for all the wants of man in a mortal state, but not for his immortal part. We are not satisfied with this statement, though we dare say the *Westminster* will be.



## CONVERSATIONS AS GOOD AS REAL

*protégés*? That it has house and land to bestow on its novices and professors? And that it may have made its will? The true Amphytrion is the Amphytrion, où l'on dine! There is common sense in that at least; and an over dose of the speculative requires a little of the practical to make up for it.

### CONVERSATIONS AS GOOD AS REAL (I)

*The Atlas.*

July 26, 1829.

T. HAVE you seen Mr. Southey's late work, called *Sir Thomas More*?

J. No; but I saw his picture by Lawrence in the exhibition. I thought it solemn and affected; looking as if the greatest man in the world was also the mildest and best. Do you know him at all?

T. Oh yes. He is a very good man, if not a very great one; and his only fault is, that he thinks there is but one Robert Southey in the world, and yet he would have everybody as like him as two twins, or if there is the smallest difference, he sends them to the Devil in his private opinion and public exhortations. It is odd that a man should be so delighted with himself for being always in the right, and so angry at others for leaving him this pre-eminence by being sometimes in the wrong.

J. Is he poet-laureate still?

T. Yes.

J. I never see any of his birth-day odes in the papers. Why does he connect his book with the name of Sir Thomas More?

T. Because he aspires to be in good company. He thinks Robert Southey alone, without a *cortège* of classical and imposing *vouchers* about him, is like a picture without a frame. It is true, he made sad havoc of the authorities, while they were against him; but now he has got the authorities on his side. He says they have come over to him, which is as if the greater body moved round the less. In his bloom he stood on his own ground and ventured from the crowd—

'Light-hearted youth! he bounds along,  
And meditates the future song—'

he crosses the desert of age under the protection of the caravan, and in a company of pilgrims.

J. You say he is afraid of the *Jacquerie* at present. Did he not travel with the *Jacquerie* in his younger days, and is he not alarmed at it now, because there is none of it left?

T. I would not be thought to bear him malice, for I owe him obligations. I am told, however, there is nothing in his book but the *megrim*s. I begin to despair of him. I was in hopes, from his throwing

## CONVERSATIONS AS GOOD AS REAL

himself back to the time of Sir Thomas More, he might by the rebound throw himself forward into the future, overlooking the fuliginous mass raised by the heat and conflict of party-spirit ; and breathing under the guidance of a sage and cautious Mentor, the purer air of his earlier and loftier prospects of man and nature ; but he seems to be possessed with nothing but the smoke and din of our manufacturing districts. There is nothing in the book (as I am told) but what might have passed between him and Mr. Croker or Lord Eldon, without invoking the shade of the venerable martyr to the popish faith. Mr. Southey is fond of a little *phantasmagoria*. He would have made a good collector of relicts or manager of a weeping wax-work Madonna. Sir Thomas introduces himself to the prose poet at his Lake of Keswick, with a purple string tied round his neck to show that he was beheaded, and says that the martyrs to the faith wear these insignia and symbols of their past history in Heaven, as Cranmer is distinguished by a flaming robe. The author consoles his spirit in the remoteness and quiet of his unambitious solitude with these visionary badges of merit and fantastic orders of knighthood, instead of the golden fleece and cross St. Andrew's. The two worthies then fall to chat on the dangers and terrors of the time, which have so long haunted ' the heat-oppressed brain ' of the laureate. Mr. L—— says that there is a pretty description of Mr. Southey's library ; but when the ruin of the state is at hand, and the fate of the world hopeless, what signifies the neat binding or lettering on the backs of Mr. Southey's library ? It is not an equivalent. Mr. L—— seemed also to hint, as an excuse for his friend's making no better use of the machinery of Sir Thomas More's opinions and wisdom, that there was little to make use of ; and that the arguments in favour of popery in his *Controversial Tracts* are so weak that he could not be sincere in them. According to L——, he must have been more a politician than an enthusiast, and encouraged popery as a useful delusion. But the reasoning in the *Utopia* (which expressed his peculiar and favourite opinions) is not very strong or convincing ; it is rather a humane and amiable aspiration after a better state of things if possible ; and surely, those who have ever seen Hans Holbein's portrait of the sturdy champion and confessor, cannot doubt his gravity or earnestness. What there was weak, must have been from slowness or habitude ; the same slowness and inflexibility would strengthen his prejudice and explain his history.

J. But you admire L——, don't you ? I thought him a genius.

T. Yes, he is both a genius and a wit. The other day, someone in company maintaining that the only pleasure in going abroad was to get back home again, L—— said, ' Then why don't you go home ? '

J. That's smart enough, and just like him.

## THE EXCLUSIONISTS IN TASTE

### THE EXCLUSIONISTS IN TASTE

*The Atlas.*

July 26, 1829.

WE hate comparisons or the *exclusive* in matters of taste; and reject, abjure, and renounce all decisions and systems of criticism founded upon them. One person cries out that if you leave the songs out of the *Duenna*, it is a poor performance, utterly inferior to the *School for Scandal*; and that both together are not to be named in a day with the *Beggar's Opera*. The inference is, that Sheridan was a scrub and a made-up writer, and, according to some people's testimony, a mean frequenter of the tables of the great. All this is mere depreciation and petty spite: it is running the downhill path of egotism and conceit. The question for common sense and true taste to decide upon, is what the *Duenna* is *with* the songs, not *without* them; and he who does not pronounce it to be a delightful performance, is himself dull. That the *School for Scandal* is better, does not make the *Duenna* a bit the worse; or that the *Beggar's Opera* may be superior to both together, only proves that it must be indeed a first-rate performance, to take the lead of such masterpieces; not that these are wretched and worthless, for in that case their inferiority would prove nothing. What is meant by always starting something else as better than that which is good, is not to show admiration of the last, but to get rid of and set down the first as good for nothing. Why must everything have a foil? And our envy be bribed to let truth and justice speak? As to Sheridan's going into the company of the great, let those speak against him who have declined similar temptations; in his politics he held out to the last, even when Charles Fox had deserted his side and was beginning to receive the new light of coalitions; and when he could no longer maintain his independence, he gave up the intimacy of his *fat friend*. Who will forget his beautiful verses to Miss Lindley, written in a grotto, or his throwing the offer of 1500*l.* a year for her to sing on the stage again into the fire, or the duel he fought for her (the most desperate in modern times), except those who are wheedled by the cant of Whiggism, to offer up their best defenders and ornaments a sordid sacrifice to rancorous Toryism and vulgar democracy? No one could pass him in the street even in his decline without being struck with him as one of the brightest and bravest of men. His eye, though quenched, was like a sword; he had a nose and mouth like Oliver Cromwell's: and his voice was sweet and manly, however little adapted to accompany a guitar! Some people are willing to give up Pope and Dryden as 'being no poets.' Captain B—— preferred *The School for Scandal* to *Love for Love*; others think *The Way of the World* Congreve's best work. What do these moot-points and hair-breadth differences prove?

## THE EXCLUSIONISTS IN TASTE

Surely, not that there is some one thing in the world which we have found out to be good, and that mankind are fools for admiring anything else, but that there is an endless variety of excellence nearly equal in different ways, if we had but the sense and spirit to enter properly into it. In comedy (and in English comedy alone) have we not Congreve's two inimitable productions, *The Way of the World*, and *Love for Love*; Wycherley's two, *The Plain-dealer*, and *The Country Girl*; Vanbrugh's four, *The Confederacy*, *The Relapse*, *The Trip to Scarborough*, and *The Provoked Husband*; Farquhar's *Beaux Stratagem* and *Recruiting Officer*; with a long list of *etceteras*, where it is only a question how to admire enough and what we shall admire most? *Oh bocconi!* What wit, what laughter, what pleasure are not connected with all these names! Really, the wonder is not how little, but how much, talent and genius there have been in the world: the range of excellence is wide enough in all conscience; it is we who have not the soul to admire, or the sense to comprehend it. Again, shall we suppose that Farquhar was the only gay or gallant officer at his mess, or that Captain Steele was the only man who knew the town in his day? L—— makes us mad in this: he wants to cut down everything to a certain standard. He wishes to leave Sancho Panza out of *Don Quixote*, and Partridge out of *Tom Jones*; and to conclude *Robinson Crusoe* when the savages appear. The author of *Waverley* rebuked him for this, saying,—‘Nay, I should be sorry to part with my old friend, Man Friday!’ L—— explores vast undiscovered, or forgotten, regions of literature; and gropes his way with a fine and masterly *tact* in the twilight of genius; but shuns the beaten path, the broad day. He speaks admirably and like an oracle of Defoe's novels, *Roxana*, *Moll Flanders*, *Colonel Jack*, &c. premising that they treat entirely of thieves, sharpers, beggars, common-women, but bring out with inconceivable truth and pathos the good qualities, the interests, hopes, and fears, inseparable from the lowest situations, and show the human heart as plain in all of them as the clock at St. Giles's tells the hour at midnight—he does all this to our heart's content—why then does he vex us by saying, that Sir Walter's are trash? And that you cannot take any single part and read it aloud, as you can a passage in Milton or Shakespeare, because there is nothing to carry you on but the story? *Cela n'est pas vrai*. This spoils all, and throws us into a dispute upon the Catholic question.

## SECTS AND PARTIES

### SECTS AND PARTIES

*The Atlas.*

August 2, 1829.

WE from our souls sincerely hate all cabals and *coteries*; and this is our chief objection to sects and parties. People who set up to judge for themselves on every question that comes before them, and quarrel with received opinions and established usages, find so little sympathy from the rest of the world that they are glad to get any one to agree with them, and with that proviso the poorest creature becomes their *Magnus Apollo*. The mind sets out indeed in search of truth and on a principle of independent inquiry; but is so little able to do without leaning on some one else for encouragement and support, that we presently see those who have separated themselves from the mere mob, and the great masses of prejudice and opinion, forming into little groups of their own and appealing to one another's approbation, as if they had secured a monopoly of common sense and reason. Wherever two or three of this sort are gathered together, there is self-conceit in the midst of them. 'You grant me judgment, and I grant you wit'—is the key-note from which an admirable duett, trio, or quartett of the understanding may be struck up at any time to the entire satisfaction of the parties concerned, though the bye-standers may be laughing at or execrating the unwelcome discord. The principle of all reform is this, that there is a tendency to dogmatism, to credulity and intolerance in the human mind itself, as well as in certain systems of bigotry or superstition; and until reformers are themselves aware of, and guard carefully against, the natural infirmity which besets them in common with all others, they must necessarily run into the error which they cry out against. Without this self-knowledge and circumspection, though the great wheel of vulgar prejudice and traditional authority may be stopped or slackened in its course, we shall only have a number of small ones of petulance, contradiction, and partisanship set a-going to our frequent and daily annoyance in its place: or (to vary the figure) instead of crowding into a common stage-coach or hum-drum vehicle of opinion to arrive at a conclusion, every man will be for mounting his own *velocipede*, run up against his neighbours, and exhaust his breath and agitate his limbs in vain. In Mr. Bentham's *Book of Fallacies* we apprehend are not to be found the crying sins of singularity, rash judgment, and self-applause. What boots it, we might ask, to get rid of tests and subscription to thirty-nine articles of orthodox belief, if, in lieu of this wholesale and comprehensive mode of exercising authority over our fellows, a DOGMA is placed upon the table at breakfast time, sits down with us to dinner, or is laid on our pillow at night, rigidly pre-

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scribing what we are to eat, drink, and how many hours we are to sleep? Or be it that the authority of Aristotle and the school-men is gone by, what shall the humble and serious inquirer after truth profit by it, if he still cannot say that his soul is his own for the sublime dulness of Mr. Maculloch, and the Dunciad of political economists? The imprimatur of the Star-Chamber, the *cum privilegio regis* is taken off from printed books—what does the freedom of the press or liberality of sentiment gain, if a board of *Utility* at Charing-cross must affix its stamp, before a jest can find its way into a newspaper, or must knock a flower of speech on the head with the sledge-hammer of cynical reform? The cloven-foot, the over-weening, impatient, exclusive spirit breaks out in different ways, in different times and circumstances. While men are quite ignorant and in the dark, they trust to others, and force you to do so under pain of fire and faggot :—when they have learned a little they think they know every thing, and would compel you to conform to that opinion, under pain of their impertinence, maledictions, and sarcasms, which are the modern rack and thumb-screw. The mode of torture, it must be confessed, is refined, though the intention is the same. Their ill-temper and want of toleration fall the hardest on their own side, for those who adhere to fashion and power care no more about their good or ill word, than about the short, unmelodious gruntings of any other sordid sty. But how is any poor devil who has got into their clutches to shelter himself from their malevolence and party-spite? Why, by enlisting under their banners, swearing to all that they say, and going all lengths with them. Otherwise, he is a *black sheep* in the flock, and made a butt of by the rest. This is a self-evident process. For the fewer people any sect or party have to sympathise with them, the more entire must that sympathy be : it must be without flaw or blemish, as a set-off to the numbers on the other side ; and they who set up to be wiser than all the world put together, cannot afford to acknowledge themselves wrong in any particular. You must, therefore, agree to all their sense or nonsense, allow them to be judges equally of what they do or do not understand, adopt their cant, repeat their jargon, have no notions but what they have, caricature their absurdities, make yourself obnoxious for their satisfaction, and a slave and lacquey to their opinions, humours, and convenience ; or they black-ball you, send you to Coventry, and play the devil with you. Thus, for any writer in a highly enlightened and liberal morning paper, not merely to question the grand arcanum of population or the doctrine of rent, would be both great and petty treason ; but it would be as much as his *place* was worth, to suggest a hint that Mrs. Chatterley is not a fine woman and a charming actress. Fanatics and

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innovators formerly appealed in support of their dreams and extravagancies to inspiration and an inward light; the modern race of philosophical projectors, not having this resource, are obliged to fortify themselves in a double crust of confidence in themselves, and contempt for their predecessors and contemporaries. It is easy to suppose what a very repulsive sort of people they must be! Indeed, to remedy what was thought a hard exterior and an intolerable air of assumption on the part of the professors of the new school, a machine, it is said, has been completed in Mr. Bentham's garden in Westminster, which turns out a very useful invention of jurisprudence, morals, logic, political economy, constitutions, and codifications, as infallibly and with as little variation as a barrel-organ plays 'God save the King,' or 'Rule Britannia':—nay, so well does it work and so little trouble or attendance does it require from the adepts, that the latter mean to sign a truce with gravity and 'wise saws,' some of them having entered at the bar, others being about to take orders in the church, others having got places in the India-house, and all being disposed to let the Bentham-machine shift for itself! *Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci*:—Mr. Bentham is old, and doubtless has made his will! Reformers will hardly see themselves in religious schismatics and sectarians, whom they despise. Perhaps others may be struck with the likeness. *Rational dissenters*, for example, think, because they alone profess the title, they alone possess the thing. All rational dissenters are with them wise and good. An Unitarian is another name for sense and honesty; and must it not be so, when to those of an opposite faith it is a name of enmity and reproach? But the intolerance on one side, though it accounts for, does not disprove the weakness on the other. We have heard of devotees who employ a *serious* baker, a *serious* tailor, a *serious* cobbler, &c. So there are staunch reformists who would prefer a *radical* compositor, a *radical* stationer or bookbinder, to all others; and think little of those on their side of the question who, besides adhering to a principle, have not, in their over-zeal and contempt for their adversaries, contrived to render it offensive or ridiculous. A sound practical consistency does not satisfy the wilful restlessness of the advocates of change. They must have the piquancy of startling paradoxes, the pruriency of romantic and ticklish situations, the pomp of itinerant professors of patriotism and *placarders* of their own *lives, travels, and opinions*. Why must a man stand up in a three-cornered hat and canonicals to bear testimony against the Christian religion, and in favour of reform? We hate all such impertinent masquerading and *double entendre*. Those who are accustomed to judge for themselves, and express their convictions at some risk and loss, are too apt to come from thinking

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that opinions may be right, *though* they are singular, to conclude that they are right, *because* they are singular. The more they differ from the world, the more convinced they are, because it flatters their self-love; and they are only quite satisfied and at their ease when they shock and disgust every one around them. They no longer consider the connexion between the conclusion and the premises, but between any idle hypothesis and their personal vanity. They cling obstinately to opinions, as they have been hastily formed; and patronize every whim that they fancy is their own. They are most confident of 'what they are least assured;' and will stake all they are worth on the *forlorn hope* of their own imaginary sagacity and clearness. An *idiosyncrasy* steals into every thing; *their* way is best. Always regarding the world at large as an old dotard, they think any single individual in it quite beneath their notice—unless it is an *alter idem* of the select *coterie*—neither consult you about their affairs, nor deign you an answer on your own, and have a model of perfection in their minds to which they refer all public and private transactions. There are *methodists* in business as well as in religion, who have a peculiar happy knack in folding a letter, or in saying *How d'ye do*, who postpone the main object to some pragmatical theory or foppish punctilio, and who might take for their motto—*all for conceit or the world well lost*.

### HOGARTH AND FIELDING—MR. NORTHCOTE'S OPINIONS

*The Atlas.*

September 6, 1829.

The ability displayed in the following letter ensures it a ready place in our columns. Our correspondent seems to charge upon us the opinions to which he objects; we are certainly responsible for the fair discussion of them, but no further. They belong to a dialogue taken from real life, and express that which every intellectual man would be curious to hear—the deliberate judgment of one who knows the arts well upon a question of taste.

#### TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE ATLAS.'

'Sir—Your dialogue last week, entitled "Conversations as good as real," No. XII., contains some arguments put into the mouth of Mr. Northcote, which appear to me a begging of the question in debate. The first is, the objection raised by Mr. Cunningham against Sir Joshua Reynolds in the *Life* he has lately written of the painter, on account of the president's not having noticed Hogarth (in his *lectures*, it is to be presumed); and the second, which springs out of this, is, whether Hogarth was a painter worthy of Sir Joshua's quoting to his pupils, or only "a great wit, and describer of manners in common life"; meaning thereby that his drawing, colouring, study of effects, as regards



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light and shade, are to pass for nothing; and that his fame is to rest solely upon the invention of his subject. Mr. Northcote opens the argument in these words—"Why, it was not his business to notice Hogarth any more than it was to notice Fielding. Both of them were great wits and describers of manners in common life, but *neither* of them came under the article of *painting*." In order that we may understand the principle upon which Mr. Northcote grounds the above opinion, he should define what "painting" is; an assertion of this character, if it be worth anything, will hold good if it be reversed, and placed after the following fashion, for instance: suppose Sir Joshua had delivered a course of lectures upon moral philosophy, embracing at the same time the principles of composition; and, in the course of his examples of powerful delineators of character, he had omitted to notice Fielding, would Mr. Northcote have defended the omission in the same words? "Why, it was not his business to notice Fielding any more than Hogarth. Both of them were great caricaturists and painters of manners in common life, but *neither* of them came under the article of *writing*." If the above parallel statement of the case will not bear canvassing, it appears to me that Mr. Northcote is not less injudicious in the comparison he has drawn between the two men; for, one or both must have been eminent in the *matriel* they used in bringing their characters before the mind and the eye of the reader or spectator; otherwise the comparison fails. In other words, both were equally eminent in *delineation* as well as conception, or they should not have been brought into juxtaposition: and, indeed, Mr. Northcote somewhat justifies this conclusion, when he says immediately after, "all that did not depend upon his own genius (Hogarth's) was detestable, both as to his *subjects* and his *execution*!" How will this opinion hold, when applied to Fielding? and yet it ought. Again, he acknowledges that "what Hogarth had was his own, and nobody will have it again in the same degree": yet, in the course of five lines he recoils, and adds, "No, *we are to imitate only what is best*, and that in which even failure is honourable, *not that where only originality and the highest point of success can at all excuse the attempt*." Does Mr. Northcote infer that Hogarth's delineation of character, and treatment of his subject was *mere* "originality," and not grounded upon the immutable principles of truth and nature? if so, how does his parallel hold good with regard to Fielding? if not, in what *did* his eminence consist? He certainly was "best" in something, by Mr. Northcote's own concession; why not then "imitate" *that* best?

Next to this extraordinary confusion of argument, we are informed that "his figures look like puppets after all, or like dolls dressed up:" and then is added, "Who would compare any of these little, miserable, deformed caricatures of men and women, to the figure of St. Paul preaching at Athens?" Who indeed! and we may also say, "who would compare Western, and Black George, and Square with Coriolanus in the forum?" The individuals in themselves are no more subjects for comparison than if Mr. Northcote had chosen to take the last patent firelock. Who would think of judging the principles of a caustic satire or a poem descriptive of manners in common life, with the most sublime class of epic? The *Beggar's Opera*, for instance, with the *Paradise Lost*. Mr. Northcote lays down, as a principle, that "what we may justly *admire* and *emulate*, is that which *raises* human nature, not that which degrades and holds it up to scorn." "Great wit" and "descriptions of manners in common life," if accurately depicted, are both subjects for admiration as well as emulation, or Fielding and Hogarth have written and painted in vain. The object of the drama, we are told from a tolerably competent authority, is, to "hold the mirror up to *nature* (under *all* her guises)—to show

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vice her own image, 'scorn' her own feature." Shall not painting do the same? Besides, if Mr. Northcote means to imply that Hogarth "degraded" human nature, that he did *not* "raise" her, but held her up to "scorn," he has come to a different conclusion from almost every individual who has studied his intention, from the days of the painter himself down to the present time. Has he not placed virtue, and loving-kindness, and long-suffering, in its fairest light? Look at the deserted female in the "Rake's Progress"! or the mother in the "Idle Apprentice." Do not these subordinate characters in those immortal tales "raise human nature"? Mr. Northcote painted a picture of the infants being smothered in the tower: what was his object in doing this work? Is human nature here "raised" by the contemplation of an act of bloody ambition, treachery, and assassination? "We may laugh (he says) to see a person rolled in the kennel, but we are ashamed of ourselves for doing so." Much depends upon the *cause* of the act: if it arise from accident, laughter is silly, and is, moreover, *not an illustration of the case in point*; if from punishment for some petty tyranny or oppression, we do not "laugh," but rub our hands at the satisfactory completion of justice. "We are *amused*!!!" (says Mr. N.) with *Tom Jones*; but we rise from the perusal of *Clarissa* with higher feelings and better resolutions than we had before. St. Giles's is not the only school of art. It is nature to be sure; but *we must select nature*." Heavens! *Alworthy* and *Sophia* in the school of St. Giles! The husband and wife, and the father-in-law, in the *Marriage à la Mode*, the St. Giles's of art! It would be curious after this, to know which Mr. Northcote would call the Grosvenor-square of art. As a farther illustration of this argument, he says, "Ask the meanest person in the gallery at a play-house which he likes best, the tragedy or the farce? And he will tell you without hesitation, the tragedy, and will prefer Mrs. Siddons to the most exquisite buffoon." This is complete begging of the question—it is not whether the common person prefer Mrs. Siddons to a buffoon, but whether he would prefer Mrs. Siddons in *Lady Macbeth* to Emery in *Tyke*. As an affair of *taste* he would most probably prefer the actress, because he was beholding a personation, foreign to his own every-day habits and associations; but he would tell you, that nothing could be more *natural* than the acting of Emery in the transported felon. This is all that would be required. Both performers fulfilled their callings in their several schools of art, and an infringement upon either side would have destroyed the integrity of their characters. I know not whether Mr. Cunningham has endeavoured to "persuade the world that Hogarth is superior to Raphael or Reynolds"; in *their* departments of art he assuredly was not; but in *his own* he was equal with the one, and superior to the other. As to the "nonsense" of Mr. Charles Lamb's "endeavour to set up Hogarth as a great tragic as well as comic genius, not inferior in either respect to Shakspeare," I leave the reader to judge for himself, by perusing attentively the *Essay upon the Character and Genius of Hogarth*, one of the most masterly pieces of criticism in the language—a work, which, when I reflect upon the beauty of the style, and the acuteness with which he has treated his subject, this letter appears little short of impertinence.

I am, Sir,

Your constant reader,

We certainly cannot agree with the speaker in the *Conversations*, in excluding Hogarth, any more than Fielding, Butler, or Molière, from comedy; or in turning our backs on comedy itself. 'Though we be

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virtuous, yet there shall be cakes and ale.' We have laboured this very point to the best of our ability more than once; and, as Lord Grey said on some occasion, 'we are not to be intimidated out of it by Mr. Waithman.' But nether can we go the length of Mr. Lamb and his admirers, who would persuade us that Hogarth is 'all in all,' the tragic and the comic muse personified; or that he contains every kind and style of excellence—beauty, refinement, sublimity as well as wit and ill-manners; since this would be to exclude Raphael, Michael Angelo, and Shakspeare as superfluous. What he is, they are not. We grant that Hogarth's figures are in the same class with Black George, Thwackum, and Alworthy; but they are not like St. Paul preaching at Athens, nor Coriolanus in the forum. That is all we want; we should be sorry for anything more;—Mr. Lamb does not draw the line distinct enough, and in the originality of his conceptions and the fervour of his feelings, does all he can to confound it. In making the natural style everything, he leaves no room for the *ideal*. Mr. Northcote deprives us of the low notes of the gamut of art, Mr. Lamb omits the high ones. Now we hate all exclusive theories and systems; insomuch that if the Catholic spirit of criticism were banished from the world, it would find refuge in our breast. Nevertheless as our correspondent takes up the matter somewhat short, we beg leave to submit the following cross-grained doubts and queries, to meet his humour.

1. Our correspondent is at a loss to understand how Hogarth, being by profession a painter, can possibly be classed with Fielding as a wit and general describer of manners. Has not Mr. Lamb answered this question in the essay referred to, where he says, 'Other pictures we look at—Hogarth's we *read*!' This *reading* language is admirable; is the form and colour, the peculiar language of painting, equally so? In Fielding there is neither form nor colour, yet there is great wit and humour: suppose the drawing and colouring in Hogarth not to be much above mediocrity, would this hinder the wit from being first-rate, and would not *that* become the point of comparison and the distinguishing characteristic of each?

2. Suppose the late Mr. Gilray to have lived in Sir Joshua's time, must he have come into the Lectures? Or why not? Is a label in the mouth of a caricature fine art? Or does the height of the jest, in fixing the cow's horns in the *Bagnigge Wells* over the husband's head, depend on the form, colour, or perspective, which are all very bad?

3. If Mr. Northcote, instead of the *Children in the Tower*, had painted 'Mother Brownrigg hiding the 'Prentices in the coal-hole,' it would have been in the style of Hogarth; but Chantry would not have imitated it.

4. Our correspondent asks, if Mr. Northcote do not admire the

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husband and wife and the father-in-law in the *Marriage-à-la-mode*, or think them St. Giles's, where will he find his Grosvenor-square? We answer that if Hogarth, from these specimens, had got any fine lady or gentleman to sit to him, even with all the oil of verbal flattery which Mr. Cunningham attributes to Reynolds, we are much mistaken; and St. Giles's and St. James's are nearer than we had imagined. There are plenty of *blackguards* and demireps in Hogarth; not one face or figure of a gentleman or lady, poet or philosopher, we will venture to affirm.<sup>1</sup> Why should there be? We know no reason why there should, except that Mr. Lamb, in the aforesaid essay (which is very fine) delivers it as 'crown's quest-law,' that the prints are full of them, and abound in the sublime and pathetic, as much as *Lear* or *Othello*. This attempt to prove that Hogarth was something more than he was, shows that his bigotted admirers are not satisfied with what he actually was, and that there was something wanting.

5. It will be time enough to defend Hogarth's comic subjects by the example of Fielding, when any one runs a similar parallel between his story of the 'Unfortunate Jilt,' in *Joseph Andrews*, and the 'narrative of Mrs. Bennet,' in *Amelia*, and the great and acknowledged samples of high tragedy.

6. Does our correspondent really find no difference between Sophia Western and Clarissa Harlowe? Or do both equally amuse and interest him? It is this confusion of feelings against which we would guard as worse than 'a confusion of arguments.' We would for ourselves exclude neither, but we know which we would choose, if we were driven to it.

7. Mr. Northcote mentioned the instance of the gallery applauding Mrs. Siddons to show that the *imaginative* principle is natural to man. They prefer her even to Tyke. Why or how is a question which a little word-catching would easily solve.

8. Finally, we like to read the *Newgate Calendar* now and then; but we would not have a collection of portraits of the rogues and vagabonds executed at Tyburn hanging round our room; nor with Hogarth's prints, would it be necessary. Pictures are but the frontispieces of books: it is best not to have them ugly. We should like to have the portrait of *Amelia* prefixed to the novel of that name, but to leave out that of the woman in the prison without her nose. Hogarth could have given the one (that we do not wish for) admirably, the other (that we do wish for) not at all.

<sup>1</sup> What is the poet in his garret? The miserable *externals* of a poet, without a particle of sensibility or enthusiasm; his wife is a poor creature (in character to be sure), but in the insolence, vulgarity and want of feeling of the milkwoman, all the genius of Hogarth shines out. The lower he descends the higher he rises. This is inverted genius and ambition to try to follow it.

## CONVERSATIONS AS GOOD AS REAL

### CONVERSATIONS AS GOOD AS REAL (2)

*The Atlas.*

September 20, 1829.

T.—Windham was very intimate with Gilray afterwards—or perhaps before; for he also had been on both sides.

J.—What I object to in Hogarth is, that he was not accomplished enough even for the task he undertook. An instance occurred the other day. A servant-girl had been decoyed from her situation, and on complaint being made before the magistrate, the officers traced her to Duke's-place, and brought her back to her friends in Wardour-Street. She was dressed up quite in the height of the fashion; and every one that went to see her, came away astonished at her perfect beauty. Could Hogarth have painted this? Yet here was a scene quite in his way. He selects what is bad in St. Giles's, not what is best in nature. That old Mother W—— lives for ever. It was she who decoyed away Emily Coventry that sat to Sir Joshua for his *Thais*. She was a chimney-sweeper's daughter, or something of that kind; but she was a vast beauty, and Mother W—— found her out in spite of her rags and dirt. She had a hawk's eye for anything of this sort. I sat facing her once in an upper box at the Opera. I never saw such an expression—her look went through you.

T.—But I suppose you looked at her again.

J.—Fielding has tried to describe Sophia as a beauty, but makes a wretched hand of it. He says first she was a beauty; and then to let you know what sort of a beauty she was, that she was like the Venus of Medici; then that her nose inclined to be Roman, which the Venus de Medici's does not; then that she resembled Kneller's portrait of Lady Ranelagh, which is like neither. The truth is, he did not know what she was like; nor that he could not in words give a description of beauty, which is the painter's province.

T.—Coleridge used to remark that description was the vice of poetry, and allegory of painting.

J.—Nothing can be better said. Since you told me that remark of his about *Paul and Virginia*, he has risen vastly in my estimation. Again, why does the correspondent in the Atlas take me up short for saying that 'we laugh at a person who is rolled in the gutter?' He observes on this, 'if it is an accident, the laughter is silly, and not a case in point; if inflicted as a punishment for some petty injustice, we do not laugh, but rub our hands.' So that we are to laugh in neither case. Is the ridicule merited where the cobbler, in the 'Election Dinner,' has smutted the face of his next neighbour? Or does the cobbler laugh the less, or will he not laugh on for ever, on

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this account? Has not Hogarth immortalised this piece of silliness in this disgraceful scene? Who will set limits (by the author's *crambo*) to the length to which he lolls out his tongue, or to the portentous rolling of his eyes in a squint of ecstasy? Is the sly leer and drooping of the widow's eyelids, or the position of the parson's hands in the 'Harlot's Funeral,' drawing as well as character and invention? Or is the fighting of the dog and the man for the bone on a perfect footing of equality (to show that hunger levels all distinctions), or the mother letting the child fall over the wall in the 'Gin-lane,' or the girl in the 'Noon,' 'with her pie-dish tottering like her virtue, and the contents running over,' (as I have seen it somewhere expressed), an example of skill in drawing? It is easy to paint a face without a nose, or with a wry one; the difficulty is to make it straight. Few persons can draw a circle; any one may draw a crooked line.

T.—But has not Hogarth hit off the exact character and expression; and is not that a proof of the painter's hand and eye?

J.—It may be so; but you cannot be sure of it. The correspondent of the paper laughs at the idea of Hogarth's coming under the article of writing. He *has* come under the article of writing. Does not the critic speak of his 'immortal tales'? Does Mr. Lamb expatiate on the drawing, colour, and effects of light and shade, or only on the moral and story? He has left out one half of the language of painting in the prints; and they are the better for it. Nor do I see what objection there is to the comparison of Hogarth to buffoons on the stage. For my part, I think Liston comes much nearer to Hogarth than Emery's Tyke; and I am sure his Lord Grizzle is just as good *in its way* as anything can possibly be. Why then does the critic scout the comparison? Because it would be ridiculous to say, that Liston's Lord Grizzle is as fine as Mrs. Siddons's Lady Macbeth; that both fulfilled their parts equally, and that neither could do more without infringing on the integrity of their characters. Yet if the dignity of the subject is to be left out of the question, Liston may be put into the scale with Mrs. Siddons just as well as Emery; but if not, then neither one nor the other can. Any one for me may say he likes *Punch and the puppet-show* as well as the finest tragedy—I should think it honest and natural enough—but I hate putting up at a half-way house between farce and tragedy, and pretending that there is no difference in the case. Persons who have no taste for, but an aversion to whatever is great and elevated, are ashamed openly to patronise farce, lest they should be laughed at; and they, therefore, get something intermediate between that and tragedy, and set it up as the finest thing in the world, to escape

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ridicule and satisfy their own perverse inclination. It is necessary to set one's face against such vulgar critics; for, like other vulgar people, if you do not keep them quite out, they will constantly encroach and turn you out of your most settled convictions with their mongrel theories.

T.—What is the aim of all high tragedy? It is to resolve the sense of pain or suffering into the sense of *power* by the aid of imagination, and by grandeur of conception and character. What is the object of Hogarth's tragicomedy? To reverse this order: that is, he gives us the extremest distress in the most revolting circumstances and in connection with the most unfeeling and weakest characters, so as either to produce the utmost disgust or excite as little sympathy as possible. Why must maternal affection be displayed, and, as it were, outraged in the strength of attachment to a most brutish and worthless moon-calf of a son? The moral may be strictly true, but the mode of conveying it is no less a penance. Why must the feeling of love be exemplified in the persevering attachment of the victim of seduction to her profligate and contemptible seducer? This is essential to Hogarth's conception of passion, that it should be at variance with its object, incongruous, and bordering on the absurd and ludicrous. Why must a fine feeling or sentiment be dragged through the kennel or stuck in the pillory before it can be tolerated in his graphic designs? There is neither unity nor grandeur. Mr. Lamb admires the expression of the losing gamester in the 'Rake's Progress': it is exactly what Liston would give in attempting such a part, and not unlike him. Why show the extreme of passion in faces unsusceptible of it, or kill the sympathy by the meanness and poverty of the associations? Mr. Lamb despises Kean's face in *Othello*: I prefer it to any of Hogarth's tragic faces, which are generally of the mock-heroic class.<sup>1</sup> The Methodist preacher in the cart with the Idle Apprentice is another Mawworm, a fantastic figure, tossed about by the wind or the spirit, though the conception would be fine for a novel or *written* story: the apprentice himself is a scare-crow, the sport of the mob, with whose indifference you take part, not with the sufferings of the hero, if he is supposed to have any. The whole is a game at tragic cross-purposes. The sublimity (such as it is) rests on a foundation of the squalid and scurrilous. The incongruous was Hogarth's element, and he could not get out of his own or (what is I fear) the national character, which delights in laughing at and exulting over the defects and mishaps of others, not from any concern for them, but as a foil to its own discontented humour and conscious

<sup>1</sup> This is the reason that low comedians generally come out in tragedy—they do not perceive the difference between the serious and the burlesque.

## CONVERSATIONS AS GOOD AS REAL

want of higher resources. Defoe, who was in the same age and class, had more imagination. His *Robinson Crusoe* is in perfect keeping. He is not solitary, but solitude: from being shut out from the world, he fills the universe with himself, and his being expands to the circumference of the ocean and sky. Hogarth would have shut him up in a work-house or a gaol, with boys hooting at him through the bars, and no escape left on the wings of the imagination or the strength of will. This may be very intense, but it is not to my taste. A disciple of this school should not go to see Madame Pasta act. He would like Madame Pesaroni better, for she is ugly, squat, and her voice is masculine and loud. The other, who is all harmony, would oppress and make him uneasy for want of some salvo to his self-love. Would a critic of this order like to see a tragic actress with a wooden leg? For this is Hogarth. Mr. Lamb admires *Moll Flanders*; would he marry Moll Flanders? There ought to be something in common in our regard for the original and the copy. A taste for the odd and eccentric eats like a canker into the mind; and if not checked, drives out all relish for the noble and consistent as stiff and pedantic. The drollery is certainly less; and if there is not some set-off in earnestness and dignity, the serious must be at a low ebb indeed, and *Hudibras* is finer than *Paradise Lost*. It would be a proof of bad taste to like to look at a mean or ill-formed face, for the sake of laughing at it, rather than at a fine one. And so in art: the representation of brutality, coarseness, and want of capacity and feeling is surely less desirable than the representation of the opposite qualities; or it is saying that you laugh at and despise a thing for falling short of a certain excellence and perfection, and when it gains that excellence and perfection, it is no better than it was before.

J.—You remember the drawing I showed you by Lane, after the ‘Possessed Boy’ of Domenichino? There was there infinite sensibility, infinite delicacy, agony with sweetness, beauty in the midst of distortion. You saw there that every fine feeling had passed through the painter’s mind, or he could not have expressed them; you were made to sympathise with them, and to understand and revere them as a part of your own nature. Compared with works like this, which are the pure mirrors of truth and beauty, Hogarth’s subjects are the very ‘measles’ of art—the scum and offal—it is like going a voyage in a convict-ship, with an alternation of the same humours and the same horrors—it is a bad prospect for life.

T.—There is some limit. The late Edinburgh murders would not bear being transferred to the canvas, though the group at Ambrose’s would make a subject for a sketch, so nice are the distinctions of taste.



## CONVERSATIONS AS GOOD AS REAL

J.—The comic sets off the serious by contrast, and is a necessary relief; but how little a way does the sense of defect go towards a conception of, or power to embody the reverse! Look at Hogarth's attempts at dignified subjects, and see how poor and feeble they are. His 'Pool of Bethesda' is pitiable; but in the burlesque composition, where he introduces the devil cutting away the leg of the stool on which St. Paul is preaching, he is himself again, and worthy of all imitation. The critic in the Atlas asks what I mean by originality, as if I thought it independent of any prototypes in nature? No, originality consists in seeing nature for yourself; but it does not follow that everyone can do this or is to see nature alike, or there would be nothing remarkable in it.

T.—Crabbe is an original writer; but it is to be hoped he will have few followers. Mr. Lamb, by softening the disagreeableness of one of his tales, has taken out the sting.

J.—Hogarth is an exception to general rules; I said so before. He is the only great comic painter; and he is so for this reason—that painting is not the mother-tongue of comedy. Would not this be allowed of sculpture? I have not seen the 'Tam O'Shanter'; but some Scotch critics are already, I hear, for exploding the *antique*. Painting is a dry, plodding art; a bottle-nose, if you come to examine it closely, becomes a very dull affair. We *talk* of a hump-back or a sore leg, which is enough of a good thing; the painter is obliged to give them entire, which is too much. Neither can he carry off this grossness by brilliancy of illustration, or rapidity of narrative. The eye and the mind take in a group or a succession of incidents in an instant; the hand follows lamely and slowly after, and naturally loses, in the mechanical details of each object, the surprise, odd starts, and contrasts, which are the life of comedy. Hogarth alone, by his double allusions, and by his giving motion (which is time) overcame this difficulty, or painted as if he were no painter, but set down each figure by a stroke of the pencil, or in a kind of *short-hand* of the art, being obliged to run neither into caricature nor still-life. This extreme facility or tenaciousness (amounting to a two-fold language) was his peculiar *forte*, and that in which he was, and will remain, unrivalled. Ducrow acts romances on horse-back; but it is not the best way of acting them; and few will imitate him without breaking their necks.

T.—Do not the same remarks apply in some measure to painting history?

J.—In some measure, they do; and therefore grand and dignified subjects are in general to be preferred to the more violent and distressing ones. Therefore Titian's portraits are on a par with history.

## TRIFLES LIGHT AS AIR

You who admire Titian, how you must look at Hogarth! You see they avoid the sight of blood even on the stage. In short, it is a question, whether low and disagreeable subjects are fit to be painted; and Sir Joshua, among others, did not much approve of them. It is *not* a question whether grace and grandeur are fit subjects for painting—this alone settles the preference, and is some excuse for the author of the *Discourses* in perhaps making it a little too exclusive. If it were true that Hogarth is universal, or contains the highest kind of excellence, no one would dispute about him. After all, a *hurdygurdy* is neither a lute nor an organ.

## TRIFLES LIGHT AS AIR

*The Atlas.*

September 27 and October 4, 1829.

I. THERE is no flattery so gross or extravagant but it will be acceptable. It leaves some sting of pleasure behind, since its very excess seems to imply that there must be some foundation for it. Tell the ugliest person in the world that he is the handsomest, the greatest fool that he is a wit, and he will believe and thank you. There is a possibility at least that you may be sincere. Even the sycophant's ironical laugh turns to a smile of self-complacency at our own fancied perfections.

II. There is no abuse so foul or unprovoked but some part of it will *stick*. Ill words break the charm of good deeds. Call a man names all the year round, and at the end of the year (for no other reason) his best friends will not care to mention his name. It is no pleasant reflection that a man has been accused, however unjustly, of a folly or a crime. We involuntarily associate words with things; and the imagination retains an unfavourable impression long after the understanding is disabused. Or if we repel the charge and resent the injustice, this is making a toil of a pleasure, and our cowardice and indolence soon take part with the malice of mankind. The assailants are always the more courageous party. It degrades a man even to be subjected to undeserved reproach, for it seems as if without some flaw or blemish no one would dare to attack him; so that the viler and more unprincipled the abuse, the lower it sinks, not him who offers, but him who is the object of it, in general estimation. If we see a man covered with mud we avoid him without expressing the cause. The favourites of the public, like Cæsar's wife, must not be suspected; and it is enough if we admire and bear witness to the superiority of another under the most favourable circumstances—to

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do this in spite of secret calumny and vulgar clamour is a pitch of generosity which the world has not arrived at.

III. A certain *manner* makes more conquests than either wit or beauty. Suppose a woman to have a graceful ease of deportment, and a mild self-possession pervading every look and tone of voice; this exercises an immediate influence on a person of an opposite and irritable temperament—it calms and enchants him at once. It is like soft music entering the room—from that time he can only breathe in her presence, and to be torn from her is to be torn from himself for ever.

IV. Fame and popularity are *disparate* quantities, having no common measure. A poet or painter now living may be as great as any poet or painter that ever did live; and if he be so, he will be so thought of by future ages, but he cannot by the present. Persons of overweening vanity and shortsighted ambition, who would forestall the meed of fame, show themselves unworthy of it, for they reduce it to a level with the reputation they have already earned. They should surely leave something to look forward to. It is weighing dross against gold—comparing a meteor with the polar star. Lord Byron's narrowness or presumption in this respect was remarkable. What! did he not hope to live two hundred years himself, that he should say it was merely a fashion to admire Milton and Shakspeare as it was the fashion to admire him? Those who compare Sir Walter Scott with Shakspeare do not know what they are doing. They may blunt the feeling with which we regard Shakspeare as an old and tried friend, though they cannot transfer it to Sir Walter Scott, who is, after all, but a new and dazzling acquaintance. To argue that there is no difference in the circumstances is not to put the author of *Waverley* into actual possession of the reversion of fame, but to say that he shall never enjoy it, since it is no better than a chimera and an illusion. It is striking at the foundation of true and lasting renown, and overturning with impatient and thoughtless hands the proud pre-eminence, the golden seats and blest abodes which the predestined heirs of immortality wait for beyond the tomb. The living are merely candidates (more or less successful) for popular applause, the *dead* are a religion, or they are nothing.

V. Persons who tell an artist that he is equal to Claude, or a writer that he is as great as Bacon, do not add to the satisfaction of their hearers, but pay themselves a left-handed compliment, by supposing that their judgment is equivalent to the suffrage of posterity.

VI. A French artist advised young beginners against being too fond of a variety of colours, which might do very well on a smaller scale, but when they came to paint a large picture they would find

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they had soon lavished all their resources. So superficial writers may deck out their barren round of *common-places* in the finest phrases imaginable; but those who are accustomed to *work out* a subject by dint of study, must not use up their whole stock of eloquence at once, they must bring forward their most appropriate expressions as they approach nearer to the truth, and raise their style with their thoughts. A good general keeps his reserve, the *élite* of his troops, to charge at the critical moment.

VII. 'Procrastination is the thief of time.' It is singular that we are so often loth to begin what gives us great satisfaction in the progress, and what, after we have once begun it, we are as loth to leave off. The reason is, that the imagination is not excited till the first step is taken or the first blow is struck. Before we begin a certain task, we have little notion how we shall set about it, or how we shall proceed: it is like attempting something of which we have no knowledge, and which we feel we are incapable of doing. It is no wonder, therefore, that a strong repugnance accompanies this seeming inaptitude: it is having to *make bricks without straw*. But after the first effort is over, and we have turned our minds to the subject, one thing suggests another, our ideas pour in faster than we can use them, and we launch into the stream which bears us on with ease and pleasure to ourselves. The painter who did not like to mix his colours or begin on a new canvas in the morning, sees the light close in upon him with unwilling eyes; and the essayist, though gruelled for a thought, or at a loss for words at the outset of his labours, winds up with alacrity and spirit.

VIII. Conversation is like a game at tennis, or any other game of skill. A person shines in one company who makes no figure in another—just as a tolerably good cricketer, who might be an acquisition to a country club, would have his wicket struck down at the first bowl at *Lord's-ground*. The same person is frequently dull at one time and brilliant at another: sometimes those who are most silent at the beginning of an entertainment are most loquacious at the end. There is a *run in the luck* both in cards and conversation. Some people are good speakers but bad hearers: these are put out, unless they have all the talk to themselves. Some are best in a *tête-à-tête*; others in a mixed company. Some persons talk well on a set subject, who can hardly answer a common question, still less pay a compliment or make a *repartee*. Conversation may be divided into the *personal* or the *didactic*: the one resembles the style of a lecture, the other that of a comedy. There are as many who fail in conversation from aiming at too high a standard of excellence, and wishing only to utter oracles or *jeux-d'esprit*, as there are who expose themselves from

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having no standard at all, and saying whatever comes into their heads. Pedants and gossips compose the largest class. Numbers talk on without paying any attention to the effect they produce upon their audience : some few take no part in the discourse but by assenting to everything that is said, and these are not the worst companions in the world. An outcry is sometimes raised against dull people, as if it were any fault of theirs. The most brilliant performers very soon grow dull, and we like people to begin as they end. There is then no disappointment nor false excitement. The great ingredient in society is good-will. He who is pleased with what he himself has to say, and listens in his turn with patience and good-humour, is wise and witty enough for us. We do not covet those parties where one wit dares not go, because another is expected. How delectable must the encounter of such pretenders be to one another ! How edifying to the bye-standers !

IX. It was well said by Mr. Coleridge, that people never improve by contradiction, but by *agreeing to differ*. If you discuss a question amicably you may gain a clear insight into it ; if you dispute about it you only throw dust in one another's eyes. In all angry or violent controversy, your object is not to learn wisdom, but to prove your adversary a fool ; and in this respect, it must be admitted, both parties usually succeed.

X. Envy is the ruling passion of mankind. The explanation is obvious. As we are of infinitely more importance in our own eyes than all the world beside, the chief bent and study of the mind is directed to impress others with this self-evident but disputed distinction, and to arm ourselves with the exclusive signatures and credentials of our superiority, and to hate and stifle all that stands in the way of, or obscures, our absurd pretensions. Each individual looks upon himself in the light of a dethroned monarch, and the rest of the world as his rebellious subjects and runaway slaves, who withhold the homage that is his natural due, and burst the chains of opinion he would impose upon them : the madman in Hogarth (sooth to say), with his crown of straw and wooden sceptre, is but a type and *common-place* emblem of every-day life.

XI. It has been made a subject of regret that in forty or fifty years' time (if we go on as we have done) no one will read Fielding. What a falling-off ! Already, if you thoughtlessly lend *Joseph Andrews* to a respectable family, you find it returned upon your hands as an improper book. To be sure, people read 'Don Juan' ; but *that* is in verse. The worst is, that this senseless fastidiousness is more owing to an affectation of gentility than to a disgust at vice. It is not the scenes that are described at an alehouse, but the *alehouse* at

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which they take place that gives the mortal stab to taste and refinement. One comfort is, that the manners and characters which are objected to as *low* in Fielding have in a great measure disappeared or taken another shape; and this at least is one good effect of all excellent satire—that it destroys ‘the very food whereon it lives.’ The generality of readers, who only seek for the representation of existing models, must therefore, after a time, seek in vain for this obvious verisimilitude in the most powerful and popular works of the kind; and will be either disgusted or at a loss to understand the application. People of sense and imagination, who look beyond the surface or the passing folly of the day, will always read *Tom Jones*.

XII. There is a set of critics and philosophers who have never read anything but what has appeared within the last ten years, and to whom every mode of expression or turn of thought extending beyond that period has a very odd effect. They cannot comprehend how people used such out-of-the-way phrases in the time of Shakspeare; the style of Addison would not do now—even Junius, they think, would make but a shabby *thread-bare* figure in the columns of a modern newspaper—all the riches that the language has acquired in the course of time, all the idiomatic resources arising from study or accident, are utterly discarded—sink under-ground: and all that is admired by the weak or sought after by the vain, is a thin surface of idle affectation and glossy innovations. Even spelling and pronunciation have undergone such changes within a short time, that Pope and Swift require a little *modernizing* to accommodate them ‘to ears polite’; and that a *bluestocking belle* would be puzzled in reciting Dryden’s sounding verse with its occasional barbarous, old-fashioned accenting, if it were the custom to read Dryden aloud in those serene, morning circles. There is no class more liable to set up this narrow superficial standard, than people of fashion, in their horror of what is vulgar and ignorance of what really is so; they have a jargon of their own, but scout whatever does not fall in with it as Gothic and *outré*; the English phrases handed down from the last age they think come cast of Temple-bar, and they perform a sedulous quarantine against them. The *Times*, having found it so written in some outlandish *depêche* of the Marquis of Wellesley’s, chose as a mark of the *haute littérature*, to spell *dispatch* with an *e*, and for a long time he was held for a novice or an affected and absolute writer who spelt it otherwise. The *Globe*, with its characteristic good sense and sturdiness of spirit, has restored the old English spelling in defiance of scandal. Some persons who were growing jealous that the author of *Waverley* had eclipsed their favourite luminaries may make themselves easy; he himself is on the wane with those whose opinions ebb and flow with

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the 'inconstant moon' of fashion, and has given way (if Mr. Colburn's advertisements speak true, 'than which what's truer?') to a set of titled nonentities. Nothing solid is to go down, or that is likely to last three months; instead of the standing dishes of old English literature we are to take up with the *nicknacks* and whipt syllabubs of modern taste; are to be occupied with a stream of title-pages, extracts, and specimens, like passing figures in a *camera obscura*, and are to be puzzled in a mob of new books as in the mob of new faces in what was formerly the narrow part of the Strand.

XIII. Never pity people because they are ill-used. They only wait the opportunity to use others just as ill. Hate the oppression and prevent the evil if you can; but do not fancy there is any virtue in being oppressed, or any love lost between the parties. The unfortunate are not a jot more amiable than their neighbours, though they give themselves out so, and our pity takes part with those who have disarmed our envy.

XIV. The human mind seems to improve, because it is continually in progress. But as it moves forward to new acquisitions and trophies, it loses its hold on those which formerly were its chief boast and employment. Men are better chemists than they were, but worse divines; they read the newspapers, it is true, but neglect the classics. Everything has its turn. Neither is error extirpated so much as it takes a new form and puts on a more artful disguise. Folly shifts its ground, but finds its level: absurdity is never left without a subterfuge. The dupes of dreams and omens in former times, are now the converts to graver and more solemn pieces of quackery. The race of the sanguine, the visionary, and the credulous, of those who believe what they wish, or what excites their wonder, in preference to what they know, or can have rationally explained, will never wear out; and they only transfer their innate love of the marvellous from old and exploded chimeras to fashionable theories, and the *terra incognita* of modern science.

XV. It is a curious speculation to take a modern *belle*, or some accomplished female acquaintance, and conceive what her great-great-grandmother was like, some centuries ago. Who was the Mrs. — of the year 200? We have some standard of grace and elegance among eastern nations 3000 years ago, because we read accounts of them in history; but we have no more notion of, or faith in, our own ancestors than if we had never had any. We *cut the connexion* with the Druids and the Heptarchy; and cannot fancy ourselves (by any transformation) inmates of caves and woods, or feeders on acorns and sloes. We seem *engrafted* on that low stem—a bright, airy, and insolent excrescence.

## COVENT GARDEN THEATRE

XVI. There is this advantage in painting, if there were no other, that it is the truest and most self-evident kind of history. It shows that there were people long ago, and also *what* they were, not in a book darkly, but face to face. It is not the half-formed clay, the old-fashioned dress, as we might conceive; but the living lineaments, the breathing expression. You look at a picture by Vandyke, and there see as in an enchanted mirror, an English woman of quality two hundred years ago, sitting in unconscious state with her child playing at her feet, and with all the dove-like innocence of look, the grace and refinement that it is possible for virtue and breeding to bestow. It is enough to make us proud of our nature and our countrywomen; and dissipates at once the idle, *upstart* prejudice that all before our time was sordid and scarce civilised. If our progress does not appear so great as our presumption has suggested, what does it signify? With such models kept in view, our chief object ought to be not to degenerate; and though the future prospect is less gaudy and imposing, the retrospect opens a larger and brighter *vista* of excellence.

XVII. I am by education and conviction inclined to republicanism and puritanism. In America they have both; but I confess I feel a little staggered in the practical efficacy and saving grace of *first principles*, when I ask myself, 'Can they throughout the United States, from Boston to Baltimore, produce a single head like one of Titian's Venetian nobles, nurtured in all the pride of aristocracy and all the blindness of popery?' Of all the branches of political economy, the human face is perhaps the best criterion of *value*.

## COVENT GARDEN THEATRE

*The Atlas.*

October 4, 1829.

WE sincerely hope that this theatre will not only open, but *keep open*. That is the point at issue. Sorry should we be to see the Muse of tragedy blind of an eye, to see comedy limp on one leg, and to find, in sporting phrase, one of the *day-lights of the town darkened*—no longer to witness the rival playbills flaunt it at one another in the pastrycooks' or oil-shops, or the shrill cry of 'a bill for Covent-garden or Drury-lane?' mingle with the last summons of the postman's bell, or penetrate the thick vapours of the fog, as we took our way to either in the winter-evenings of each revolving year! Sorry should we be to have to wander through the Piazzas as a deserted cloister; to have that well-known avenue to so many bright visions and charming traditions closed up—'for ever silent and for ever sad'—and not a hope left to qualify



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the scent of rotten cabbage-stalks and soften the din of electioneering mobs! Let there be another O.P. row expected—turn Covent-garden into a bear-garden, and there would be no fear of this; people would go fast enough, the house would be crammed-full night after night, and the delight in the noise of cat-calls, the sound of our own voices, and the chance of a public-spirited bruising-match, would bring an overflow, which the Muses and the Graces—which wit and genius had in vain endeavoured to effect. Here, as we suspect, lies the root of the mischief. This said organ of *combativeness* prevails too much in everything with us—the spirit of contradiction is the Devil. We can only agree to differ: our foible is not that of being unanimous. Our nationality evaporates in our hatred and contempt of other countries, and never settles down into a love or attachment to anything we ourselves possess. This is not for want of *good things* among us, but of good-will to be pleased with and reap the benefit of them. We are divided into sects and parties: we must cry up or run down something. We are Protestants even in our pleasures, rebels to our own comforts. Without a cabal, without a tilting-match, without a *row*, we can do nothing: we are like fish out of water, with neither life nor spirit in us. Hence we have no such thing as a theatrical public, though this is not for want of a national drama—of actors or of authors. They order these things better in France. There Racine is a religion: with us Shakespeare forms a sect, and, if the truth were to be spoken, not a very numerous one. There Molière is just as well known as the way to the *Pont-Neuf*: ask the frequenters of the pit here, ‘Who wrote *Love for Love*, or the *Country Girl*?’ and they would stare or laugh at you. They would think it a very *unbusinesslike* question, and that it was quite enough for them that they had paid their money and sat out the play. Look at the pit at the *Théâtre-Français*, and see them follow the long speeches of a French tragedy, anticipating every line, marking every intonation, attentive to, wrapped up in the scene, without a breath, without a gesture that can interrupt the charm of the oft-repeated illusion—and then turn and see our own box-lobby loungers lolling and yawning to show their superiority to the play and the players, *slamming* to the doors in the middle of the finest passage, and much more ready to pick a quarrel with their next neighbour than to interchange opinions with him, or to join in admiring the performance. This, they think, would show a want of spirit and independence, and would be unworthy of the manly character of John Bull. If liberty produces ill-manners and want of taste, she is a very excellent parent with two very disagreeable daughters. What we need, is a more Catholic spirit in literature; an Act of Uniformity in matters of taste and opinion. Till we have this, we shall be deficient in decency and

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zeal ; and can never expect that ‘ long pull, strong pull, and pull all together,’ which has been so earnestly called for, and which can alone ensure the triumph and permanence of any public object. What is the good of each person’s having his own sulky or fanciful opinion in such matters, as he has his own pipe or pot of porter and newspaper, if there is no point of union, no common creed ? Public enthusiasm and support is not made up of solitary whims—of chaotic elements. We have then a national drama, affording scenes for a display of the most exquisite theatrical powers ; but nobody (except a few old-fashioned *dilettanti*) knows or cares anything about them : we have actors capable of doing justice to these rich and varied scenes ; but we quarrel with them, or they quarrel with the manager or with one another. We have an admired tragic actor ; but a moralist in the *Times* picks a hole in his coat, and he is *sent to Coventry* ; or if this rent is patched up and the rage of virtue in the British public appeased, then there are other actors who think themselves as good as he, and who refuse to draw in the same harness with him. Again, this is not the case in France. They have a company, and get up an entire and superb *dramatis personæ* : here (owing to our jealousies and feuds) we have only *stars*, and the rest of the performance is left to shift for itself. Instead of groups of excellence on the stage (as we might have, and as we must have, to prevent disgust and disappointment in the real lovers of the drama), we have only the *dissecta membra poetæ*, shattered fragments and vile disproportions : instead of a cordial co-operation and laudable ambition to gratify the public, each is bent on pushing himself forward or on keeping others back ; one of the principal competitors refuses to act on the same night as the other, or goes to the other house to be *out of harm’s way*—wonders the town do not crowd to see him *top* his part and mar the play, and would sooner (so much does the pitiful *amour-propre* get the better of the more rational *esprit de corps*) see either of the great theatres a ruin, than that it should be said or supposed for an instant to be propped up on the unworthy shoulders of the ‘ bony prizer,’ the pocket-Hercules of the stage. Enough, and perhaps too much of this. All we wish is, that every sacrifice should be made, and every obstacle removed to the success of this theatre. It opens under great disadvantages. The gloomy season is approaching, and with the English imagination, it is November all the year. We see the worst side of the good ; and do not easily anticipate success out of misfortune. We run from a falling house : we dread the mention, and turn from the thoughts, of all bankrupt concerns (it may be our own case)—we avoid a theatre with an execution in it, as if it had the plague. We are afraid the run (after the first speech-making and face-making) will be to the American house, the

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flourishing firm. The grass will grow on the steps of Covent-garden : the vulgar will flock to Drury-lane. ' Sweep on, ye fat and greasy citizens ! Wherefore should you look upon that poor and broken bankrupt there ? ' Now, John Bull ! pluck up a spirit and show you are a man : do not be frightened at your own fears and forebodings, and remember that it will only cost you so much money, whether the play-house tumbles on its own head before the end of the year or not : do not, for God's sake, be contented with charitable donations, and with seeing your name in the newspapers ; do not merely hold up the head of Covent-garden to let it sink again, but launch it into the full tide of your favour and confidence, and float the magnificent wreck with colours flying and with loud acclamations to the end of the season ! A writer in an evening paper takes occasion from the circumstance of a French lady of quality (the wife of a minister), having been turned out of a box at the play-house for talking loud and indecently, to recommend ' at one fell swoop ' turning all the woman of a given description out of the theatres, whether they behave ill or no. This he thinks would immediately fill the house with respectable company. This is always the way with our logic, morals, and politics. We always conceive that one evil is to be cured by another. It is a curious *quid pro quo*. A lady of quality has been turned out of a box in Paris for improper behaviour, without respect to her class—therefore turn out a whole class without respect to their behaviour. It is this very bias of mind that produces the inconvenience in question. These unfortunate persons know that you regard them with an evil eye, and would set the law and the constable at them if you could ; and therefore so long as they can, they set you at defiance and laugh in your face. In England a woman of quality would not be turned out of a stage box for talking loud and indecently, we should think it a privilege of the court ; but we should (in revenge) go up into the second circle to turn out a woman of another description for sitting still, and looking handsome. In France, even women of gay character ' submit ' (as Mr. Burke has it) ' to the soft collar of social esteem '—decorum pervades every part of the audience, because everything is referred to manners and opinion—with us, where there is always an eye to the beadle and the treadmill, nothing but an appeal to brute force tames the natural rudeness of our characters, or appeases the *moral* grudge, that rankles like a heart-burn or a liver-complaint in our bosoms. We always aim to arrive at the agreeable through the disagreeable : the other is the right way—to banish the disagreeable by the sense of the contrary. Instead of recommending that no lady be admitted who does not bring a gentleman in her hand, we would cordially assent that no young creature should be dragged in and out of the boxes every five seconds

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by a couple of old clothes-women. Or if the gallant suggestion in the *Courier* of no single female being admitted were insisted on to the letter, we doubt whether a corps of *cavaliers servantes* might not be raised to evade the difficulty, even in this age of newspaper morality.

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*The Atlas.*

October 11, 1829.

THE motto of the English nation is 'exclusion.' In this consists our happiness and our pride. If you come to a gentleman's park and pleasure-grounds, you see written up, 'Man-traps and steel-guns set here'—as if he had no pleasure in walking in them, except in the idea of keeping other people out. Having little of the spirit of enjoyment in ourselves, we seek to derive a stupid or sullen satisfaction from the privations and disappointment of others. Everything resolves itself into an idea of *property*, that is, of something that our neighbours dare not touch, and that we have not the heart to enjoy. The invidious distinction of the *private boxes* arose out of this principle; and has done a great deal of harm. Was it to secure the best place for the best company? Are they filled with peers and peeresses eager to see the play, and enjoying it at the height? On the contrary, they are quite empty; or you see nobody there but Madame Vestris and her friends. But having secured the exclusive privilege, and shut others out, this is all the satisfaction we are capable of. The consequence has been, that the nobility and gentry no longer appearing in the open boxes, they have ceased to be the favourite resort of genteel and fashionable company; people no longer go for the chance of sitting in the next box to a prince or minister of state, of seeing how a courtier smiles on hearing a countess lisp, or with the hope of being mixed up in splendid confusion with the flower of the land. A certain disrepute is thus thrown upon the boxes, which are left to a sort of second city-company. The partitioning off the *stalls* at the Opera is a part of the same wretched system. Before, a seat in the pit of the Opera was a reputable distinction; everyone there was on a footing of equality. This pleasure was envied as getting too common; and to circumscribe it the contrivance of the stalls was invented, by which an implied stigma is thrown on the rest of the pit, and where fine gentlemen and ladies, admitted under lock and key, and sitting at English ease, look back on the crowd behind them like the footmen behind their chairs. Whether it is our unsocial temper, or our system of equality and the dread of encroachment, that produces this exclusive spirit, we cannot say; but the fruit is most bitter and painful. The other night an attempt was made to

## OUR NATIONAL THEATRES

shut out *improper* people from the theatre; did the *proper* people go the more the next night? No! their object was to prevent others from going; and if by this under-hand mode the doors of the theatre were finally closed, it would afford an additional gratification to their malice and poverty of imagination. We hope there is more genuine old English honesty and feeling, and more of a cordial play-going humour left in the public than to allow of such a catastrophe. There is no calculating the mischief that would ensue. There is not a person in this great metropolis who does not rise with a pleasanter feeling in the morning, and eat his breakfast with a better relish, from a consciousness (whether adverted to or not) that he may go to which of the great theatres he pleases in the evening. There is not a chimney-sweeper who does not get his shilling's worth of pleasure out of them once a year, which must serve him the remainder. There is not a young lady who mopes away her time in the country who does not console herself with the thought of seeing Mr. Charles Kemble act when she comes up to town in the winter. The stage is become part of the vital existence of this civilised country; and our circulation cannot go on well without it. To the real lover of the drama, to see the fall of one of our great theatres is like cutting off one of his hands. Our recollections of the stage, of the masterpieces of wit and pathos that support it, of the proud and happy names that adorn it, of the Siddonses, the Kembles, the Jordans, the Lewises, the Quicks, the Mundens, the Cookes, the Little Simmonses, the Bannisters, the Suetts—what are they but recollections of ourselves, of our liveliest pleasures, of our youthful hopes, 'dear as the ruddy drops that visit the sad heart'? and shall we close the door on all these bright visions, and let a noble pile crumble into ruins and bury all these cherished names in common rubbish, so that we can never think or speak of them again but with regret and shame, and not deem it one of the greatest calamities that can happen to us? Whoever sees a play ought to be better and more sociable for it; for he has something to talk about, some ideas and feelings in common with his neighbours. Even the players, as they pass along the streets, glance a light upon the day; and (sports of fortune, puppets of opinion as they are) give us a livelier interest in humanity, of which they are the representatives. If we meet Mrs. D—— in Cranbourn-alley, we get up the narrow part of King-street without being jostled by anyone. It would be one of the worst signs of the times to find that Covent-garden was no more; and would be our first approach to the state of those old and once flourishing cities in other parts of the world, where you see the skeletons of mighty theatres still standing as monuments of the past, and the magnificence that raised them mouldering in oblivion.

## COMMON SENSE

### COMMON SENSE

*The Atlas.*

October 11, 1829.

COMMON sense is a rare and enviable quality. It may be truly said that 'its price is above rubies.' How many learned men, how many wits, how many geniuses, how many dull and ignorant people, how many cunning knaves, how many well-meaning fools are without it ! How few have it, and how little do they or others know of it, except from the infallible results—for one of its first requisites is the utter absence of all pretension ! The vulgar laugh at the pedant and enthusiast for the want of it, while they themselves mistake bigotry and narrow-minded notions for it. It is not one of the sciences, but has been well pronounced to be 'fairly worth the seven.' It is a kind of mental instinct, that feels the air of truth and propriety as the fingers feel objects of touch. It does not consist with ignorance, for we cannot pronounce on what we do not know ; and on the other hand, the laying in a stock of knowledge, or mastering any art or science, seems to destroy that native simplicity, and to warp and trammel the unbiassed freedom of mind which is necessary to its receiving and giving their due weight to ordinary and casual impressions. Common sense is neither a peculiar talent nor a laborious acquirement, but may be regarded as a sound and impartial judgment operating on the daily practice of life, or on what 'comes home to the business and bosoms of men' ; combined with great attainments and speculative inquiries, it would justly earn the title of *wisdom* ; but of the latter we have never known a single instance, though we have met with a few of the former ; that is, we have known a number of persons who were wise in the affairs of the world and in what concerned their own interest, but none who, beyond this, and in judging of general questions, were not the dupes of some flaw of temper, of some weakness or vanity, or even striking advantage of their own. To give an example of two in illustration. A person may be an excellent scholar, a good mathematician, well versed in law and history, a first-rate chess-player, a dazzling fencer, in a word, a sort of *admirable Crichton*—you are disposed to admire or envy so many talents united—you smile to see him wanting in common sense, and getting into a dispute about a *douceur* to a paltry police-officer, and thinking to interest all Europe and both Houses of Parliament in his success. It is true, he has law and reason on his side, has Grotius and Puffendorf and the *statutes at large* doubled down in dog-ears for the occasion, has a vast and lively apparatus of well-arranged premises and conclusions ready to play off against his adversaries ; but he does not consider that he has to deal with interest and custom, those

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impalpable, intangible essences, that 'fear no discipline of human wit.' Does he think to check-mate the police? Will he stop the mouth of a hungry tide-waiter with a syllogism? Or supersede a perquisite by the *reductio ad absurdum*? It is a want of common sense, or the not distinguishing properly between the definite and the indefinite. No one can have arrived at years of discretion without knowing or feeling that he cannot take a single step without some compromise with existing circumstances; that the path of life is intercepted with innumerable turnpike-gates, at which he must pay down the toll of his own convictions and of strict justice; that he cannot walk the streets but by tacit allowance; and that to disregard all impediments in the right line of reason and written forms is to imitate the conduct of *Commodore Truncheon*, who mistook the land for the sea, and went to be married by the wind and compass. The proofs of this occur every hour of the day—they may not be registered, they may not be remembered, but they are virtually and effectively noted down by the faculty of common sense, which does not feel its way the less surely because it proceeds often mechanically and blindly. There may be exceptions indeed to ordinary rules, on which a man may go to martyrdom and a stake (such as that of Hampden and ship-money), but these occur once in a century, and are only met with at the corners of streets by those who have an excess of logical discrimination, and have to pay a certain tax for being too clever by half. It is the fashion at present among the philosophical vulgar to decry *feeling*, both the name and the thing. It would be difficult, however, to do without it: for this word embraces all that mass of knowledge and of common sense which lies between the extremes of positive proof or demonstration and downright ignorance; and those who would pragmatically confine their own convictions or those of others to what is absolutely known and understood, would at best become scientific pedants and artificial barbarians. There are some persons who are the victims of argument; as there are others who are the slaves of minute details and matters of fact. One class will have a reason for every thing, and will admit the greatest absurdities that are formally proposed to them; the other must have facts to support every conclusion, and can never see an inch beyond their noses. The last have the *organ of individuality* largely developed, and are proportionably deficient in common sense. Their ideas are all local and literal. To borrow the language of a great but obscure metaphysician, their minds are *epileptic*; that is, are in perpetual throes and convulsions, fasten on every object in their way not to help but to hinder their progress, and have no voluntary power to let go their hold of a particular circumstance, to grasp the whole of any question, or

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suspend their judgment for an instant. The fact that is before them is every thing; the rest goes for nothing. They are always at cross-purposes with themselves, for their decisions are the result of the last evidence, without any corrective or qualifier in common sense; in the hunt after proofs, they forget their principles, and gain their point, though they lose their cause.

The Scotch have much of this *matter-of-fact* understanding, and bigotry to personal and actual statistics. They would persuade you that there is no country but Scotland, nothing but what is Scotch. Mr. Mac Alpine shifts the discourse from the metropolis, hurries rapidly over the midland counties, crosses the border, and sits down to an exordium in praise of the 'kindly Scot.' Charity has its home and hearth by Tweed-side, where he was born and bred, Scotch beggars were quite different from English beggars: there was none of the hard-heartedness towards them that was always shown in England. His mother, though not a rich woman, always received them kindly, and had a bag of meal out of which she always gave them something, as they went their rounds. 'Lord! Mr. Mac Alpine!' says Mrs. Mac Alpine, 'other people have mothers as well as you, and there are beggars in England as well as Scotland. Why, in Yorkshire, where I was brought up, common beggars used to come round just as you describe, and my mother, who was no richer than yours, used to give them a crust of bread or broken victuals just in the same way; you make such a *fuss* about nothing.' Women are best to set these follies to rights:—

'They have no figures nor no fantasies,  
Which busy thought draws in the brains of men.'

If no great philosophers, they do not want common sense; and are only misled in what lies beyond their sphere of feeling and observation, by taking up the opinions of their *better halves*. The common people in like manner do not want common sense in what falls under their especial cognizance and daily practice. A country shoemaker or plough-man understands shoemaking, and can 'crack of ploughs and kine,' though he knows nothing of the Catholic question. If an old woman in a country-town believes she shall be burnt at a stake, now that this question is settled, it is because she is told so by those who ought to know better, and who impose *their* prejudices upon *her* ignorance. Vulgar errors which are taken on trust, or are traditional, or are the blunders of ignorance on points of learning, have nothing to do with common sense, which decides only on facts and feelings which have come under its own notice. Common sense and *common place* are also the antipodes of each other: the one is a collection of



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true experiences, the other a routine of cant phrases. All affectation is the death of common sense, which requires the utmost simplicity and sincerity. Liars must be without common sense, for instead of considering what things really are, their whole time and attention are taken up in imposing false appearances on themselves and their neighbours. No conceited person can have the faculty we have been speaking of, since all objects are tinged and changed from their proper hue by the idle reflection of their fancied excellence and superiority. Great talkers are in the same predicament, for they sacrifice truth to a fine speech or sentiment, and conceal the real consequences of things from their view by a cloud of words, of empty breath. They look at nature not to study what it is, but to discover what they can say about it. Passionate people are generally thought to be devoid of judgment. They may be so, when their passions are touched to the quick; but without a certain degree of natural irritability, we do not conceive truth leaves sufficient stings in the mind, and we judge correctly of things according to the interest we take in them. No one can be a physiognomist, for example, or have an insight into character and expression, without the correspondent germs of these in his own breast. Phlegmatic C——, with all his husbandry acquirements, is but half a philosopher, half a clown. Poets, if they have not common sense, can do very well without it. What need have they to conform their ideas to the actual world, when they can create a world according to their fancy? We know of no remedy for want of tact and insight into human affairs, any more than for the defect of any other organ. *Tom Jones* is, we think, the best horn-book for students in this way; and if the novice should rise up no wiser from its repeated perusal, at least such an employment of his time will be better than playing the fool or talking nonsense. After all, the most absurd characters are those who are so, not from a want of common sense, but who act in defiance of their better knowledge. The capricious and fickle who change every moment, the perverse who aim only at what is placed out of their reach, the obstinate who pursue a losing cause, the idle and vicious who ruin themselves and every one connected with them, do it as often with their eyes open as from blind infatuation; and it is the bias of their wills, not the deficiency of their understandings, that is in fault. The greatest fools in practice are sometimes the wisest men in theory, for they have all the advantage of their own experience and self-reflection to prompt them; and they can give the best advice to others, though they do not conceive themselves bound to follow it in their own instance. *Video meliora proboque*, &c. Their judgments may be clear and just, but their habits and affections lie all the wrong way; and it is as

## A NEWSPAPER SKETCH

useless as it would be cruel to expect them to reform, since they only delight and can only exist in their darling absurdities and daily and hourly *escapades* from common sense and reason.

### A NEWSPAPER SKETCH

*The Atlas.*

October 18, 1829.

As a specimen of a large class, take the editor of a very respectable morning paper. With a great deal of zeal and multifarious information, he constantly blunders on the wrong scent; catches his adversary tripping in a date or an historical fact, and never heeds whether he does not give him ten times the advantage by pointing out his error; magnifies the items of the political account, and wholly overlooks the sum-total. Thus, if he get a document of pauperism or misery from a particular town or district in France, he immediately gives a licence to his pen to cover the whole land with rags and vermin, in defiance of common fame and the concurrent reports of travellers; that is, from the entire disproportion between his general and his individual impressions, and the tyranny which the latter exercise over the former in his mind. If he hear a story of a Spanish peasant sitting under a vine or on a mountain side, this graphic image takes entire possession of his fancy, wafts him to his favourite Highlands, and makes him forget the horrors of the inquisition and the whole course of history. In advocating the Greek cause, he would turn aside to make an eulogy on the Turkish character, neutralising, by some awkward, headstrong, and ill-timed concession, the effect of all he had said. In nine cases out of ten, the *Morning Chronicle* arguments stop the way of reform, instead of clearing it. There is equally a want of policy and of logical *keeping* in them. In October, the editor maintains stoutly that the mass of the population are in favour of Catholic emancipation:—in March, he finds out, from the last shout of the mob or the last petition to the house, that they are against it, and communicates his tardy and premature discovery to the world with ‘the impressiveness of a revelation.’ *The head is not sound: the great body of opinion is rotten.* What then? Is that so much to be wondered at? If the majority, in being adverse to the Catholic question, judge freely and for themselves, it is a serious objection—if they have been led by authority, let them be so still—they have no right to differ from it, nor will they long. But no explanation of this kind is given or attempted by this *cat’s-cradle* reasoner as a set-off against the supposed matter of fact, which he swallows the more greedily in its crude state, inasmuch as it tells against himself, with all the sanguineness of disappointed expectation and the wantonness of unrequited candour. Emboldened

## A NEWSPAPER SKETCH

by defeat, he proceeds to pull an old house over his head; and sets about proving (as if this were a triumph to his party) that the Revolution of 1688 stands upon no better foundation than Catholic emancipation. That event also was, it seems, decided against the sense of the great majority of the nation. This resemblance is not an argument in favour of Catholic emancipation, but of the restoration of popery and slavery. It is leaving the Revolution without a leg to stand upon. If it had neither the *vox Dei* nor the *vox populi* for it, what had it to trust to for support? Oh! a few well-informed noblemen and gentlemen were for it—we are much obliged to them for this recognition of our liberties, and to the writer in the leading Whig journal for this unanswerable mode of overturning divine right and establishing popular freedom. The other day our adventurous and ill-advised speculator launched out into a long dissertation in praise of the jesuits—their learning, their policy, their system of education, their perfect unity of action—omitting the sole practical or *common sense* question, whether all this was not directed to the support and aggrandisement of arbitrary power, and whether all these fine accomplishments, with the detail of which our man of discovery is delighted, as so many novelties and triumphs over musty prejudice, did not render them the more dangerous? This is always the way—our shrewd politician takes up a vulgar prejudice that the jesuits were a set of contemptible wretches, finds on inquiry into particulars that one half of this prejudice is untrue, and instead of inferring that their abilities and arts made the matter worse and were the real cause of their overthrow, would reinstate them in public opinion as a society of very injured gentlemen, and give them a *carte blanche* to blow all his own schemes of liberality and freedom into the air! He never dreams of this. He is wiser than a vulgar prejudice, but no match for the Machiavelian cunning of his new *protégés*. Poor innocent!

‘ Pleas’d to the last, he crops the flowery food;  
And licks the hand just raised to shed his blood!’

Such conduct reminds one of the lady who refused to prosecute the highwayman because he was handsome; or it is mistaking *facts* for *truths*, as *Don Quixote* mistook windmills for giants! There is, however, no remedy for what proceeds from a natural shortsightedness or contraction of the mental vision; which is the greater pity, as such persons, being the creatures of immediate impression and impulse, are generally well-meaning and free from sinister designs, and their worst character is that of *Marplots*, unless they get into the hands of knaves and dastards, who want a tool to do their dirty work for them.

## CONVERSATIONS AS GOOD AS REAL

### CONVERSATIONS AS GOOD AS REAL (3)

*The Atlas.*

November 1, 1829.

T.—Was I not right in stating it to be an error to suppose that character is one thing, and to be judged of from a single circumstance? The simplicity of language constantly runs us into false abstractions. We call a man by one name, and forget the heap of contradictions of which he is composed. An acquaintance was wondering not long ago, how a man of sense that he mentioned could be guilty of such absurdities in practice. I answered that a man's understanding often had no more influence over his will than if they belonged to two different persons; nor frequently so much, since we sometimes consented to be governed by advice, though we could not controul our passions if left to ourselves.

J.—That is very true; but I do not see why you should express so much eagerness about it, as if your life depended on it.

T.—Nor I neither: I was not aware that I did so.

J.—You lay too much stress on these speculative opinions and abstruse distinctions. You fancy it is the love of truth: it is quite as much the pride of understanding. Are you as ready to be convinced yourself as you are bent on convincing others? You and those like you pretend to benefit mankind by discovering something new; but you can find out nothing that has not been invented and forgotten a hundred times. The world turns round just the same, in spite of the chirping of all the grasshoppers or squabbles of all the philosophers upon it. I told G. so the other day, who did not much like it—I said he gave a power of *creation* to the human mind, which did not belong to it. Even Shakspeare, who was so original and saw so deeply into the springs of nature, created nothing: he only brought forward what existed before. I said, 'You may observe and combine, but you can add nothing—neither a colour to the rainbow, nor a note to music, nor a faculty to the mind. And it's well that you cannot; for my belief is, that if you could create the smallest thing, the world would not last three months, so little are you to be trusted with power.' G. retorted by a charge of misanthropy; and I asked him who were those dignifiers of the species to whom he wished me to look up with so much awe and reverence. He answered, somewhat to my surprise, Burke, Fox, and Sheridan. I expected he would have named Lord Bacon, or some of those. I was not much staggered by his authorities.

T.—I did not know G. was so parliamentary: he might, while he was about it, have mentioned the three last speakers of the House of Commons, Lord Colchester, Lord Sidmouth, and Mr. Onslow.

## ORIGINALITY

J.—He should have gone farther off: it is distance that hides defects and magnifies. So it is with that prejudice of classical learning. You lock up names in an obsolete language, and they become sacred. I do not wish to speak against a classical education; it refines and softens, I grant; and I see the want of it in Cobbett, and others, who may be regarded as upstarts in letters. But surely it often gives a false estimate of men and things. Every one brought up in colleges, and drugged with Latin and Greek for a number of years, firmly believes *that there have been about five people in the world, and that they are dead*. All that actually exists, he holds to be nothing. The world about him is a phantasmagoria: he considers it a personal affront that any one should have common sense, or be able to find his way along the street, without looking for it in Plato or Aristotle. The classical standard turns shadows into realities and realities into shadows. A man of sense is trying to get the better of this early prejudice all his life; and hardly succeeds, after infinite mortification, at last. The dunces and pedants are the best off; they never suspect that there is any wisdom in the world but that of the ancients, of which they are the depositaries.

T.—I do not think G. goes that length; but he only exists in his passion for books and for literary fame. You cannot shock him more than by questioning any established reputation.

J.—Yes, he conceives himself to be a free-thinker, and yet is a bigot in his way.

T.—Men will have some idol, some mythology of their own—the *dii majores* or *minores*—something that they think greater than themselves, or that they would wish to resemble; and G. would be as angry at a sceptic on the subject of Burke's style, as a Catholic would be at a heretic who denied the virtues and miracles of his patron saint.

## ORIGINALITY

*The Atlas.*

January 3, 1830.

ORIGINALITY is any conception of things, taken immediately from nature, and neither borrowed from, nor common to, others. To deserve this appellation, the copy must be both true and new. But herein lies the difficulty of reconciling a seeming contradiction in the terms of the explanation. For as any thing to be *natural* must be referable to a consistent principle, and as the face of things is open and familiar to all, how can any imitation be new and striking, without being liable to the charge of extravagance, distortion, and singularity? And, on the other hand, if it has no such peculiar and distinguishing

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characteristic to set it off, it cannot possibly rise above the level of the trite and common-place. This objection would indeed hold good and be unanswerable, if nature were one thing, or if the eye or mind comprehended the whole of it at a single glance; in which case, if an object had been once seen and copied in the most cursory and mechanical way, there could be no farther addition to, or variation from, this idea, without obliquity and affectation; but nature presents an endless variety of aspects, of which the mind seldom takes in more than a part or than one view at a time; and it is in seizing on this unexplored variety, and giving some one of these new but easily recognised features, in its characteristic essence, and according to the peculiar bent and force of the artist's genius, that true originality consists. Romney, when he was first introduced into Sir Joshua's gallery, said, 'there was something in his portraits which had been never seen in the art before, but which every one must be struck with as true and natural the moment he saw it.' This could not happen if the human face did not admit of being contemplated in several points of view, or if the hand were necessarily faithful to the suggestions of sense. Two things serve to perplex this question; first, the construction of language, from which, as one object is represented by one word, we imagine that it is one thing, and that we can no more conceive differently of the same object than we can pronounce the same word in different ways, without being wrong in all but one of them; secondly, the very nature of our individual impressions puts a deception upon us; for, as we know no more of any given object than we see, we very pardonably conclude that we see the whole of it, and have exhausted inquiry at the first view, since we can never suspect the existence of that which, from our ignorance and incapacity, gives us no intimation of itself. Thus, if we are shown an exact likeness of a face, we give the artist credit chiefly for dexterity of hand; we think that any one who has eyes can *see a face*; that one person sees it just like another, that there can be no mistake about it (as the object and the image are in our notion the same)—and that if there is any departure from our version of it, it must be purely fantastical and arbitrary. *Multum abludit imago*. We do not look beyond the surface; or rather we do not see into the surface, which contains a labyrinth of difficulties and distinctions, that not all the effects of art, of time, patience, and study, can master and unfold. But let us take this *self-evident proposition*, the human face, and examine it a little; and we shall soon be convinced what a Proteus, what an inexplicable riddle it is! Ask any one who thinks he has a perfect idea of the face of his friend, what the shape of his nose or any other feature is, and he will presently find his mistake;—ask a lover to

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draw his 'mistress' eyebrow,' it is not merely that his hand will fail him, but his memory is at fault both for the form and colour; he may, indeed, dream, and tell you with the poet, that

'Grace is in all her steps, heaven in her eye,  
In every gesture, dignity and love':—

but if he wishes to embody his favourite conceit, and to convince any one else of all this by proof positive, he must borrow the painter's aid. When a young artist first begins to make a study from a head, it is well known that he has soon done, because after he has got in a certain general outline and rude masses, as the forehead, the nose, the mouth, the eyes in a general way, he sees no farther, and is obliged to stop; he feels in truth that he has made a very indifferent copy, but is quite at a loss how to supply the defect—after a few months' or a year or two's practice, if he has a real eye for nature and a turn for his art, he can spend whole days in working up the smallest details, in correcting the proportions, in softening the gradations; and does not know when to leave off, till night closes in upon him, and then he sits musing and gazing in the twilight at what remains for his next day's work. Sir Joshua Reynolds used to say, that if he did not finish any one of his pictures till he saw nothing more to be done to it, he should never leave off. Titian wrote on his pictures, *faciebat*—as much as to say that he was about them, but that it was an endless task. As the mind advances in the knowledge of nature, the horizon of art enlarges and the air refines. Then, in addition to an infinity of details, even in the most common object, there is the variety of form and colour, of light and shade, of character and expression, of the voluptuous, the thoughtful, the grand, the graceful, the grave, the gay, the *I know not what*; which are all to be found (separate or combined) in nature, which sufficiently account for the diversity of art, and to detect and carry off the *spolia opima* of any one of which is the highest praise of human genius and skill—

'Whate'er Lorrain light-touch'd with softening hue,  
Or savage Rosa dash'd, or learned Poussin drew.'

All that we meet with in the master-pieces of taste and genius is to be found in the previous capacity of nature; and man, instead of adding to the store, or *creating* any thing either as to matter or manner, can only draw out a feeble and imperfect transcript, bit by bit, and one appearance after another, according to the peculiar aptitude and affinity that subsists between his mind and some one part. The mind resembles a prism, which untwists the various rays of truth, and displays them by different modes and in several parcels. Enough has

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been said to vindicate both conditions of originality, which distinguish it from singularity on the one hand and from vulgarity on the other; or to show how a thing may at the same time be both true and new. This novel truth is brought out when it meets with a strong congenial mind—that is, with a mind in the highest degree susceptible of a certain class of impressions, or of a certain kind of beauty or power; and this peculiar strength, congeniality, truth of imagination, or command over a certain part of nature, is, in other words, what is meant by *genius*. This will serve to show why original inventors have in general (and except in what is mechanical), left so little for their followers to improve upon; for as the original invention implies the utmost stretch and felicity of thought, or the greatest strength and sagacity to discover and dig the ore from the mine of truth, so it is hardly to be expected that a greater degree of capacity should ever arise (than the highest), that a greater mastery should be afterwards obtained in shaping and fashioning the precious materials, than in the first heat and eagerness of discovery; or that, if the capacity were equal, the same scope and opportunity would be left for its exercise in the same field. If the genius were different, it would then seek different objects and a different vent, and open new paths to fame and excellence, instead of treading in old ones. Hence the well-known observation, that in each particular style or class of art, the greatest works of genius are the earliest. Hence, also, the first productions of men of genius are often their best. What was that *something* that Romney spoke of in Reynolds's pictures that the world had never seen before, but with which they were enchanted the moment they beheld it, and which both Hoppner and Jackson, with all their merit, have but faintly imitated since? It was a reflection of the artist's mind—an emanation from his character, transferred to the canvass. It was an ease, an amenity, an indolent but anxious satisfaction, a graceful playfulness, belonging to his disposition, and spreading its charm on all around it, attracting what harmonized with, and softening and moulding what repelled it, avoiding every thing hard, stiff, and formal, shrinking from details, reposing on effect, imparting motion to *still life*, viewing all things in their 'gayest, happiest attitudes,' and infusing his own spirit into nature as the leaven is kneaded into the dough; but, though the original bias existed in himself, and was thence stamped upon his works, yet the character could neither have been formed without the constant recurrence and pursuit of proper nourishment, nor could it have expressed itself without a reference to those objects, looks, and attitudes in nature, which soothed and assimilated with it. What made Hogarth original and inimitable, but the wonderful redundancy, and, as it were, *supereroga-*



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tion of his genius, which poured the oil of humanity into the wounds and bruises of human nature, redeemed, while it exposed, vice and folly, made deformity pleasing, and turned misfortune into a jest? But could he have done so if there were no enjoyment or wit in a night-cellar, or if the cripple could not dance and sing? No, the *moral* was in nature; but let no one dare to insist upon it after him, in the same language and with the same pretensions! There was Rembrandt—did he invent the extremes of light and shade, or was he only the first that embodied them? He was so only because his eye drank in light and shade more deeply than any one before or since; and, therefore, the sunshine hung in liquid drops from his pencil, and the dungeon's gloom hovered over his canvass. Who can think of Correggio without a swimming of the head—the undulating line, the melting grace, the objects advancing and retiring as in a measured dance or solemn harmony! But all this fulness, roundness, and delicacy, existed before in nature, and only found a fit sanctuary in his mind. The breadth and masses of Michael Angelo were studies from nature, which he selected and cast in the mould of his own manly and comprehensive genius. The landscapes of Claude are in a fixed repose, as if nothing could be moved from its place without a violence to harmony and just proportion: in those of Rubens every thing is fluttering and in motion, light and indifferent, as the winds blow where they list. All this is characteristic, original, a different mode of nature, which the artist had the happiness to find out and carry to the utmost point of perfection. It has been laid down that no one paints any thing but his own character, and almost features; and the workman is always to be traced in the work. Mr. Fuseli's figures, if they were like nothing else, were like himself, or resembled the contortions of a dream; Wilkie's have a parochial air; Haydon's are heroical; Sir Thomas's genteel. What Englishman could bear to sit to a French artist? What English artist could hope to succeed in a French coquet? There is not only an individual but a national bias, which is observable in the different schools and productions of art. *Mannerism* is the bane (though it is the occasional vice) of genius, and is the worst kind of imitation, for it is a man's imitating himself. Many artists go on repeating and caricaturing themselves, till they complain that nature puts them out. Gross plagiarism may consist with great originality. Sterne was a notorious plagiarist, but a true genius. His Corporal Trim, his Uncle Toby, and Mr. Shandy, are to be found no where else. If Raphael had done nothing but borrow the two figures from Masaccio, it would have been impossible to say a word in his defence: no one has a right to steal, who is not rich enough to be robbed by others.

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So Milton has borrowed more than almost any other writer; but he has uniformly stamped a character of his own upon it. In what relates to the immediate imitation of nature, people find it difficult to conceive of an opening for originality, inasmuch as they think that they themselves see the whole of nature, and that every other view of it is wrong:—in what relates to the productions of imagination or the discoveries of science, as they themselves are totally in the dark, they fancy the whole to be a fabrication, and give the inventor credit for a sort of dealing with the Devil, or some preternatural kind of talent. Poets lay a popular and prescriptive claim to inspiration: the astronomer of old was thought able to conjure with the stars; and the skilful leech, who performed unexpected cures, was condemned for a sorcerer. This is as great an error the other way. The vulgar think there is nothing in what lies on the surface; though the learned only see beyond it by stripping off incumbrances and coming to another surface beneath the first. The difference between art and science is only the difference between the *clothed* and *naked* figure: but the veil of truth must be drawn aside before we can distinctly see the face. The physician is qualified to prescribe remedies because he is acquainted with the internal structure of the body, and has studied the symptoms of disorders: the mathematician arrives at his most surprising conclusions by slow and sure steps; and where he can add discovery to discovery by the very certainty of the hold he has of all the previous links. There is no witchcraft in either case. The invention of the poet is little more than the fertility of a teeming brain—that is, than the number and quantity of associations present to his mind, and the various shapes in which he can turn them without being distracted or losing a ‘semblable coherence’ of the parts; as the man of observation and reflection strikes out just and unforeseen remarks by taking off the mask of custom and appearances; or by judging for himself of men and things, without taking it for granted that they are what he has hitherto supposed them, or waiting to be told by others what they are. If there were no foundation for an unusual remark in our own consciousness or experience, it would not strike us as a discovery: it would sound like a *jeu-d’esprit*, a whim or oddity, or as flat nonsense. The mere mob, ‘the great vulgar and the small,’ are not therefore capable of distinguishing between originality and singularity, for they have no idea beyond the *common-place* of fashion or custom. Prejudice has no ears either for or against itself; it is alike averse to objections and proofs, for both equally disturb its blind implicit notions of things. Originality is, then, ‘the strong conception’ of truth and nature ‘that the mind groans withal,’ and of which it cannot stay to be delivered by authority or example.

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It is feeling the ground sufficiently firm under one's feet to be able to go alone. Truth is its essence; it is the strongest possible feeling of truth; for it is a secret and instinctive yearning after, and approximation towards it, before it is acknowledged by others, and almost before the mind itself knows what it is. Paradox and eccentricity, on the other hand, show a dearth of originality, as bombast and hyperbole show a dearth of imagination; they are the desperate resources of affectation and want of power. Originality is necessary to genius; for when that which, in the first instance, conferred the character, is afterwards done by rule and routine, it ceases to be genius. To conclude, the value of any work of art or science depends chiefly on the quantity of originality contained in it, and which constitutes either the charm of works of fiction or the improvement to be derived from those of progressive information. But it is not so in matters of opinion, where every individual thinks he can judge for himself, and does not wish to be set right. There is, consequently, nothing that the world like better than originality of invention, and nothing that they hate worse than originality of thought. Advances in science were formerly regarded with like jealousy, and stigmatised as dangerous by the friends of religion and the state: Galileo was imprisoned in the same town of Florence, where they now preserve his finger pointing to the skies!

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*The Atlas.*

January 10, 1830.

THE *ideal* is the abstraction of any thing from all the circumstances that weaken its effect, or lessen our admiration of it. Or it is filling up the outline of truth or beauty existing in the mind, so as to leave nothing wanting or to desire farther. The principle of the *ideal* is the satisfaction we have in the contemplation of any quality or object, which makes us seek to heighten, to prolong, or extend that satisfaction to the utmost; and beyond this we cannot go, for we cannot get beyond the highest conceivable degree of any quality or excellence diffused over the whole of an object. Any notion of perfection beyond this is a word without meaning—a thing in the clouds. Another name for the *ideal* is the *divine*; for, what we imagine of the Gods is pleasure without pain—power without effort. The *ideal* is the impassive and immortal: it is that which exists in and for itself; or is begot by the intense *idea* and innate love of it. Hence it has been argued by some, as if it were brought from another sphere, as Raphael was said to have fetched his Galatea from the skies; but it was the Gods, 'the children of Homer,' who

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peopled 'the cloud-capt Olympus.' The statue of Venus was not beautiful because it represented a goddess; but it was supposed to represent a goddess, because it was in the highest degree (that the art or wit of man could make it so) and in every part beautiful. Goddesses also walk the earth in the shape of women; the height of nature surpasses the utmost stretch of the imagination; the human form is alone the image of the divinity. It has been usual to represent the *ideal* as an abstraction of general nature, or as a *mean* or average proportion between different qualities and faculties, which, instead of carrying any one to the highest point of perfection or satisfaction, would only neutralise and damp the impression. We take our notions on this subject chiefly from the *antique*; but what higher conception do we form of the Jupiter of Phidias than that of power frowning in awful majesty? or of the Minerva of the same hand, than that of wisdom, 'severe in youthful beauty?' We shall do well not to refine in our theories beyond these examples, that have been left us—

'Inimitable on earth by model,  
Or by shading pencil shown.'

What is the Venus, the Apollo, the Hercules, but the personification of beauty, grace, and strength, or the displaying these several properties in every part of the attitude, face, and figure, and in the utmost conceivable degree, but without confounding the particular kinds of form or expression in an intermediate something, pretended to be more perfect than either? A thing is not more perfect by becoming something else, but by *being more itself*. If the face of the Venus had been soft and feminine, but the figure had not corresponded, then this would have been a defect of the *ideal*, which subdues the discordances of Nature in the mould of passion, and so far from destroying character, imparts the same character to all, according to a certain established idea or preconception in the mind. The following up the contrary principle would lead to the inevitable result, that the most perfect, that is, the most abstract, representation of the human form could contain neither age nor sex, neither character nor expression, neither the attributes of motion nor rest, but a mere unmeaning negation or doubtful balance of all positive qualities—in fact, to propose to *embody an abstraction* is a contradiction in terms. The attempt to carry such a scheme into execution would not merely supersede all the varieties and accidents of nature, but would effectually put a stop to the productions of art, or reduce them to one vague and undefined abstraction, answering to the word *man*. That amalgamation, then, of a number of different impressions

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into one, which in some sense is felt to constitute the *ideal*, is not to be sought in the dry and desert spaces or the endless void of metaphysical abstraction, or by taking a number of things and *muddling* them all together, but by singling out some one thing or leading quality of an object, and making it the pervading and regulating principle of all the rest, so as to produce the greatest strength and harmony of effect. This is the natural progress of things, and accords with the ceaseless tendency of the human mind from the *Finite* to the *Infinite*. If I see beauty, I do not want to change it for power; if I am struck with power, I am no longer in love with beauty; but I wish to make beauty still more beautiful, power still more powerful, and to pamper and exalt the prevailing impression, whatever it be, till it ends in a dream and a vision of glory. This view of the subject has been often dwelt upon: I shall endeavour to supply some inferences from it. The *ideal*, it appears then by this account of it, is the enhancing and expanding an idea from the satisfaction we take in it; or it is taking away whatever divides, and adding whatever increases our sympathy with pleasure and power 'till our content is absolute,' or at the height. Hence that *repose* which has been remarked as one striking condition of the *ideal*; for as it is nothing but the continued approximation of the mind to the *great* and the *good*, so in the attainment of this object it rejects as much as possible not only the petty, the mean, and disagreeable, but also the agony and violence of passion, the force of contrast, and the extravagance of imagination. It is a law to itself. It relies on its own aspirations after pure enjoyment and lofty contemplation alone, self-moved and self-sustained, without the grosser stimulus of the irritation of the will, privation, or suffering—unless when it is inured and reconciled to the last (as an element of its being) by heroic fortitude, and when 'strong patience conquers deep despair.' In this sense, Milton's Satan is *ideal*, though tragic: for it is permanent tragedy, or one fixed idea without vicissitude or frailty, and where all the pride of intellect and power is brought to bear in confronting and enduring pain. Mr. Wordsworth has expressed this feeling of stoical indifference (proof against outward impressions) admirably in the poem of *Laodamia*:—

' Know, virtue were not virtue, if the joys  
Of sense were able to return as fast  
And surely as they vanish. Earth destroys  
Those raptures duly: *Erebus disdains—*  
*Calm pleasures there abide, majestic pains.'*

These lines are a noble description and example of the *ideal* in poetry. But the *ideal* is not in general the strong-hold of poetry.

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For description in words (to produce any vivid impression) requires a translation of the object into some other form, which is the language of metaphor and imagination; as narrative can only interest by a succession of events and a conflict of hopes and fears. Therefore, the sphere of the *ideal* is in a manner limited to Sculpture and Painting, where the object itself is given entire without any possible change of circumstances, and where, though the impression is momentary, it lasts for ever. Hence we may see the failure in *Sir Charles Grandison*, which is an attempt to embody this perfect or *ideal* character in a succession of actions without passion, and in a variety of situations where he is still the same everlasting coxcomb, and where we are tired to death of the monotony, affectation, and self-conceit. The story of 'Patient Grizzle,' however fine the sentiment, is far from dramatic: for the *ideal* character, which is the self-sufficient, the immovable, and the one, precludes change, or at least all motive for, or interest in, the alternation of events, to which it constantly rises superior. Shakspeare's characters are interesting and dramatic, in proportion as they are not above passion and outward circumstances, that is, as they are men and not angels. The Greek tragedies may serve to explain how far the *ideal* and the *dramatic* are consistent; for the characters there are almost as ideal as their statues, and almost as impassive; and perhaps their extreme decorum and self-possession is only rendered palatable to us by the story which nearly always represents a conflict between Gods and men. The *ideal* part is, however, necessary at all times to the grandeur of tragedy, since it is the superiority of character to fortune and circumstances, or the larger scope of thought and feeling thrown into it, that redeems it from the charge of vulgar grossness or physical horrors. Mrs. Siddons's acting had this character; that is to say, she kept her state in the midst of the tempest of passion, and her eye surveyed, not merely the present suffering, but the causes and consequences; there was inherent power and dignity of manner. In a word, as there is a sanguine temperament, and a health of body and mind which floats us over daily annoyances and hindrances (instead of fastening upon petty and disagreeable details), and turns every thing to advantage, so it is in art and works of the imagination, the principle of the *ideal* being neither more nor less than that fulness of satisfaction and enlargement of comprehension in the mind itself that assists and expands all that accords with it, and throws aside and triumphs over whatever is adverse. Grace in movement is either that which is continuous and consistent, from having no obstacles opposed to it, or that which perseveres in this continuous and equable movement from a *delight* in it, in spite of interruption

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or uneven ground ; this last is the *ideal*, or a persisting in, and giving effect to, our choice of the good, notwithstanding the unfavourableness of the actual or outward circumstances. We may in like manner trace the origin of dancing, music, and poetry, which is the march of words. Self-possession is the *ideal* in ordinary behaviour. A low or vulgar character seizes on every trifling or painful circumstance that occurs, from *irritability* and want of imagination to look beyond the moment ; while a person of more refinement and capacity, or with a stronger predisposition of the mind to good, and a greater fund of good sense and pleasurable feeling to second it, despises these idle provocations, and preserves an unruffled composure and serenity of temper. This internal character, being permanent, communicates itself to the outward expression in proportionable sweetness, delicacy, and unity of effect, which it requires all the same characteristics of the mind to feel and convey to others ; and hence the superiority of Raphael's Madonnas over Hogarth's faces. *Keeping* is not the *ideal*, for there may be *keeping* in the little, the mean, and the disjointed, without strength, softness or expansion. The Fauns and Satyrs of antiquity belong (like other fabulous creations) rather to the grotesque than the *ideal*. They may be considered, however, as a bastard species of the *ideal*, for they stamp one prominent character of vice and deformity on the whole face, instead of going into the minute, uncertain, and shuffling details. As to the rest, the *ideal* abhors monsters and incongruity. If the horses in the Elgin marbles, or the boar of Meleager, are ranked with the human figures, it is from their being perfect representations of the forms and actions of the animals designed, not caricatures half-way between the human and the brute.

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*The Atlas.*

January 31, 1830.

THE Spirit of Controversy has often been arraigned as the source of much bitterness and vexation, as productive of 'envy, malice, and all uncharitableness' : and the charge, no doubt, is too well founded. But it is said to be *an ill wind that blows nobody good* ; and there are few evils in life that have not some qualifying circumstance attending them. It is one of the worst consequences of this very spirit of controversy that it has led men to regard things too much in a single and exaggerated point of view. Truth is not one thing, but has many aspects and many shades of difference ; it is neither all black nor all white ; sees something wrong on its own side, something right in others ; makes concessions to an adversary, allowances for human

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frailty, and is nearer akin to charity than the dealers in controversy or the declaimers against it are apt to imagine. The bigot and partisan (influenced by the very spirit he finds fault with) sees nothing in the endless disputes which have tormented and occupied men's thoughts but an abuse of learning and a waste of time : the philosopher may still find an excuse for so bad and idle a practice. One frequent objection made to the incessant wrangling and collision of sects and parties is, *What does it all come to?* And the answer is, *What would they have done without it?* The pleasure of the chase, or the benefit derived from it, is not to be estimated by the value of the game after it is caught, so much as by the difficulty of starting it and the exercise afforded to the body and the excitement of the animal spirits in hunting it down : and so it is in the exercises of the mind and the pursuit of truth, which are chiefly valuable (perhaps) less for their results when discovered, than for their affording continual scope and employment to the mind in its endeavours to reach the fancied goal, without its being ever (or but seldom) able to attain it. *Regard the end*, is an ancient saying, and a good one, if it does not mean that we are to forget the *beginning* and the *middle*. By insisting on the ultimate value of things when all is over, we may acquire the character of *grave* men, but not of wise ones. *Passe pour cela*. If we would set up such a sort of fixed and final standard of moral truth and worth, we had better try to construct life over again, so as to make it a *punctum stans*, and not a thing in progress ; for as it is, every end, before it can be realised, implies a previous imagination, a warm interest in, and an active pursuit of, itself, all which are integral and vital parts of human existence, and it is a begging of the question to say that an end is only of value in itself, and not as it draws out the living resources, and satisfies the original capacities of human nature. When the play is over, the curtain drops, and we see nothing but a green cloth ; but before this, there have been five acts of brilliant scenery and high-wrought declamation, which, if we come to plain matter-of-fact and history, are still something. According to the contrary theory, nothing is real but a blank. This flatters the paradoxical pride of man, whose motto is, *all or none*. Look at that pile of school divinity ! Behold where the demon of controversy lies buried ! The huge tomes are mouldy and worm-eaten :—did their contents the less eat into the brain, or corrode the heart, or stir the thoughts, or fill up the void of lassitude and *ennui* in the minds of those who wrote them ? Though now laid aside and forgotten, if they had not once had a host of readers, they would never have been written ; and their hard and solid bulk asked the eager tooth of curiosity and zeal to pierce through it. We laugh to see their



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ponderous dulness weighed in scales, and sold for waste paper. We should not laugh too soon. On the smallest difference of faith or practice discussed in them, the fate of kingdoms hung suspended; and not merely so (which was a trifle) but Heaven and Hell trembled in the balance, according to the full persuasion of our pious forefathers. Many a drop of blood flowed in the field or on the scaffold, from these tangled briars and thorns of controversy; many a man marched to a stake to bear testimony to the most frivolous and incomprehensible of their dogmas. This was an untoward consequence; but if it was an evil to be burnt at a stake, it was well and becoming to have an opinion (whether right or wrong) for which a man was willing to be burnt at a stake. Read Baxter's *Controversial Works*: consider the flames of zeal, the tongues of fire, the heights of faith, the depths of subtlety, which they unfold, as in a darkly illuminated scroll; and then ask how much we are gainers by an utter contempt and indifference to all this? We wonder at the numberless volumes of sermons that have been written, preached, and printed on the Arian and Socinian controversies, on Calvinism and Arminianism, on surplices and stoles, on infant or adult baptism, on image-worship and the defacing of images; and we forget that it employed the preacher all the week to prepare his sermon (be the subject what it would) for the next Lord's-day, with infinite collating of texts, authorities, and arguments; that his flock were no less edified by listening to it on the following Sunday; and how many *David Deans's* came away convinced that they had been listening to the 'root of the matter'! See that group collected after service-time and pouring over the grave-stones in the churchyard, from whence, to the eye of faith, a light issues that points to the skies! See them disperse; and as they take different paths homeward while the evening closes in, still discoursing of the true doctrine and the glad tidings they have heard, how 'their hearts burn within them by the way'! Then again, we should set down, among other items in the account, how the school-boy is put to it to remember the text, and how the lazy servant-wench starts up to find herself asleep in church-time! Such is the business of human life; and we, who fancy ourselves above it, are only so much the more taken up with follies of our own. We look down in this age of reason on those controverted points and nominal distinctions which formerly kept up such 'a coil and pudder' in the world, as idle and ridiculous, because we are not parties to them; but if it was the *egotism* of our predecessors that magnified them beyond all rational bounds, it is no less egotism in us who undervalue their opinions and pursuits because they are not ours; and, indeed, to leave egotism out of human nature, is 'to leave the part of *Hamlet* out of the play of

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*Hamlet.* Or what are we the better with our *Utilitarian Controversies*, Mr. Taylor's discourses (delivered in canonicals) against the evidence of the Christian religion, or the changes of ministry and disagreements between the Duke of Wellington and the Duke of Newcastle?

'Strange! that such difference should be  
'Twixt Tweedledum and Tweedledee!'

But the prevalence of religious controversy is reproached with fomenting spiritual pride and intolerance, and sowing heart-burnings, jealousies, and fears, 'like a thick scurf o'er life;' yet, had it not been for this, we should have been tearing one another to pieces like savages for fragments of raw flesh, or quarrelling with a herd of swine for a windfall of acorns under an oak-tree. The world has never yet done, and will never be able to do, without some apple of discord—some bone of contention—any more than courts of law can do without pleadings, or hospitals without the sick. When a thing ceases to be a subject of controversy, it ceases to be a subject of interest. Why need we regret the various hardships and persecutions for conscience-sake, when men only clung closer to their opinions in consequence? They loved their religion in proportion as they paid dear for it. Nothing could keep the Dissenters from going to a conventicle while it was declared an unlawful assembly, and was the highroad to a prison or the plantations—take away tests and fines, and make the road open and easy, and the sect dwindles gradually into insignificance. A thing is supposed to be worth nothing that costs nothing. Besides, there is always pretty nearly the same quantity of malice afloat in the world; though with the change of time and manners it may become a finer poison, and kill by more unseen ways. When the sword has done its worst, slander, 'whose edge is sharper than the sword,' steps in to keep the blood from stagnating. Instead of slow fires and paper caps fastened round the heads of the victims, we arrive at the same end by a politer way of nicknames and anonymous criticism. *Blackwood's Magazine* is the modern version of Fox's *Book of Martyrs*. Discard religion and politics (the two grand topics of controversy), and people would hate each other as cordially, and torment each other as effectually about the preference to be given to Mozart or Rossini, to Malibran or Pasta. We indeed fix upon the most excellent things, as God, our country, and our King, to account for the excess of our zeal; but this depends much less upon the goodness of our cause than on the strength of our passions, and our overflowing gall and rooted antipathy to whatever stands in the way of our conceit and obstinacy. We set up an idol (as we set up a mark to shoot at) for

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others to bow down to, on peril of our utmost displeasure, let the value of it be what it may——

‘Of whatsoe’er descent his Godhead be,  
Stock, stone, or other homely pedigree,  
In his defence his servants are as bold  
As if he had been born of beaten gold.’

It is, however, but fair to add, in extenuation of the evils of controversy, that if the points at issue had been quite clear, or the advantage all on one side, they would not have been so liable to be contested about. We condemn controversy, because we would have matters all our own way, and think that ours is the only side that has a title to be heard. We imagine that there is but one view of a subject that is right; and that all the rest being plainly and wilfully wrong, it is a shocking waste of speech, and a dreadful proof of prejudice and party spirit, to have a word to say in their defence. But this is a want of liberality and comprehension of mind. For in general we dispute either about things respecting which we are a good deal in the dark, and where both parties are very possibly in the wrong, and may be left to find out their mutual error; or about those points, where there is an opposition of interests and passions, and where it would be by no means safe to cut short the debate by making one party judges for the other. They must, therefore, be left to fight it out as well as they can; and, between the extremes of folly and violence, to strike a balance of common sense and even-handed justice. Every sect or party will, of course, run into extravagance and partiality; but the probability is, that there is some ground of argument, some appearance of right, to justify the grossest bigotry and intolerance. The fury of the combatants is excited because there is something to be said on the other side of the question. If men were as infallible as they suppose themselves, they would not dispute. If every novelty were well-founded, truth might be discovered by a receipt; but as antiquity does not always turn out an old woman, this accounts for the *vis inertiae* of the mind in so often pausing and setting its face against innovation. Authority has some advantages to recommend it as well as reason, or it would long ago have been scouted. Aristocracy and democracy, monarchy and republicanism, are not all pure good or pure evil, though the abettors or antagonists of each think so, and that all the mischief arises from others entertaining any doubt about the question, and insisting on carrying their absurd theories into practice. The French and English are grossly prejudiced against each other; but still the interests of each are better taken care of under this exaggerated notion than if that vast mass of rights and pretensions, which each is struggling

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for, were left to the tender mercies and ruthless candour of the other side. '*Every man for himself and God for us all*' is a rule that will apply here. Controversy, therefore, is a necessary evil or good (call it which you will) till all differences of opinion or interest are reconciled, and absolute certainty or perfect indifference alike takes away the possibility or the temptation to litigation and quarrels. We need be under no immediate alarm of coming to such a conclusion. There is always room for doubt, food for contention. While we are engrossed with one controversy, indeed, we think every thing else is clear; but as soon as one point is settled, we begin to cavil and start objections to that which has before been taken for gospel. The Reformers thought only of opposing the Church of Rome, and never once anticipated the schisms and animosities which arose among Protestants: the Dissenters, in carrying their point against the Church of England, did not dream of that crop of infidelity and scepticism which, to their great horror and scandal, sprung up in the following age, from their claim of free inquiry and private judgment. The *non-essentials* of religion first came into dispute; then the essentials. Our own opinion, we fancy, is founded on a rock; the rest we regard as stubble. But no sooner is one out-work of established faith or practice demolished, than another is left a defenceless mark for the enemy, and the engines of wit and sophistry immediately begin to batter it. Thus we proceed step by step, till, passing through the several gradations of vanity and paradox, we come to doubt whether we stand on our head or our heels, alternately deny the existence of spirit and matter, maintain that black is white, call evil good and good evil, and defy any one to prove the contrary. As faith is the prop and cement that upholds society by opposing fixed principles as a barrier against the inroads of passion, so reason is the *menstruum* which dissolves it by leaving nothing sufficiently firm or unquestioned in our opinions to withstand the current and bias of inclination. Hence the decay and ruin of states—then barbarism, sloth, and ignorance—and so we commence the circle again of building up all that it is possible to conceive out of a rude chaos, and the obscure shadowings of things, and then pulling down all that we have built up, till not a trace of it is left. Such is the effect of the ebb and flow and restless agitation of the human mind.

## ENVY

*The Atlas.*

February 14, 1830.

ENVY is the *grudging* or receiving pain from any accomplishment or advantage possessed by another. It is one of the most tormenting

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and odious of the passions, inasmuch as it does not consist in the enjoyment or pursuit of any good to ourselves, but in the hatred and jealousy of the good fortune of others and the debarring and defrauding them of their due and what is of no use to us, on the *dog in the manger* principle; and it is at the same time as mean as it is revolting, as being accompanied with a sense of weakness and a desire to conceal and tamper with the truth and its own convictions, out of paltry spite and vanity. It is, however, but an excess or excrescence of the other passions (such as pride or avarice) or of a wish to monopolise all the good things of life to ourselves, which makes us impatient and dissatisfied at seeing any one else in possession of that to which we think we have the only fair title. Envy is the deformed and distorted offspring of *egotism*; and when we reflect on the strange and disproportioned character of the parent, we cannot wonder at the perversity and waywardness of the child. Such is the absorbing and exorbitant quality of our self-love, that it represents us as of infinitely more importance in our own eyes than the whole universe put together, and would sacrifice the claims and interest of all the world beside to the least of its caprices or extravagances: need we be surprised then that this little, upstart, overweening self, that would trample on the globe itself and then weep for new ones to conquer, should be uneasy, mad, mortified, eaten up with chagrin and melancholy, and hardly able to bear its own existence, at seeing a single competitor among the crowd cross its path, jostle its pretensions, and stagger its opinion of its exclusive right to admiration and superiority? This it is that constitutes the offence, that gives the shock, that inflicts the wound, that some poor creature (as we would fain suppose) whom we had before overlooked and entirely disregarded as not worth our notice, should of a sudden enter the lists and challenge comparison with us. The presumption is excessive; and so is our thirst of revenge. From the moment, however, that the eye fixes on another as the object of envy, we cannot take it off; for our pride and self-conceit magnify that which obstructs our success and lessens our self-importance into a monster; we see nothing else, we hear of nothing else, we dream of nothing else, it haunts us and takes possession of our whole souls; and as we are engrossed by it ourselves, so we fancy that all the rest of the world are equally taken up with our petty annoyances and disappointed pride. Hence the 'jealous leer malign' of envy, which, not daring to look that which provokes it in the face, cannot yet keep its eyes from it, and gloats over and becomes as it were enamoured of the very object of its loathing and deadly hate. We pay off the score which our littleness and vanity has been running up, by ample and gratuitous concessions to the first person that gives

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a check to our swelling self-complacency, and forces us to drag him into an unwilling comparison with ourselves. It is no matter who the person is, what his pretensions—if they are a counterpoise to our own, we think them of more consequence than anything else in the world. This often gives rise to laughable results. We see the jealousies among servants, hackney-coachmen, cobblers in a stall; we are amused with the rival advertisements of quacks and stage-coach proprietors, and smile to read the significant intimation on some shop window, ‘No connection with the next door’; but the same folly runs through the whole of life; each person thinks that he who stands in his way or outstrips him in a particular pursuit, is the most enviable, and at the same time the most hateful character in the world. Nothing can show the absurdity of the passion of envy in a more striking point of view than the number of rival claims which it entirely overlooks, while it would arrogate all excellence to itself. The loftiness of our ambition and the narrowness of our views are equal, and indeed both depend upon the same cause. The player envies only the player, the poet envies only the poet, because each confines his idea of excellence to his own profession and pursuit, and thinks, if he could but remove some hapless competitor out of his way, he should have a clear stage to himself, or be a ‘Phoenix gazed by all:’ as if, though he crushed one rival, another would not start up; or as if there were not a thousand other claims, a thousand other modes of excellence and praiseworthy acquirements, to divide the palm and defeat his idle pretension to the sole and unqualified admiration of mankind. Professors of every class see merit only in their own line; yet they would blight and destroy that *little bit* of excellence which alone they acknowledge to exist, except as it centres in themselves. Speak in praise of an actor to another actor, and he turns away with impatience and disgust: speak disparagingly of the first as an actor in general, and the latter eagerly takes up the quarrel as his own: thus the *esprit de corps* only comes in as an appendage to our self-love. It is perhaps well that we are so blind to merit out of our immediate sphere, for it might only prove an additional *eye-sore*, increase the obliquity of our mental vision, multiply our antipathies, or end in total indifference and despair. There is nothing so bad as a cynical apathy and contempt for every art and science from a superficial *smattering* and general acquaintance with them all. The merest pedantry and the most tormenting jealousy and heart-burnings of envy are better than this. Those who are masters of different advantages and accomplishments, are seldom the more satisfied with them: they still aim at something else (however contemptible) which they have not or cannot do. So Pope says of Wharton—

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' Though wondering senates hung on all he spoke,  
The club must hail him master of the joke.  
Shall parts so various aim at nothing new?  
He'll shine a Tully and a Wilmot too.'

The world, indeed, are pretty even with these constellations of splendid and superfluous qualities in their fastidious estimate of their own pretensions, for (if possible) they never give any individual credit for more than one leading attainment. If a man is an artist, his being a fine musician adds nothing to his fame. When the public strain a point to own one claim, it is on condition that the fortunate candidate waives every other. The mind is prepared with a plausible antithesis in such cases against the formidable encroachments of vanity: one qualification is regularly made a foil to another. We allow no one to be two things at a time: it quite unsettles our notions of personal identity. If we allow a man wit, it is part of the bargain that he wants judgment: if style, he wants matter. Rich, but a fool or miser—a beauty, but vain; *so runs the bond*. 'But' is the favourite monosyllable of envy and self-love. Raphael could draw and Titian could colour—we shall never get beyond this point while the world stands; the human understanding is not cast in a mould to receive double proofs of entire superiority to itself. It is folly to expect it. If a farther claim be set up, we call in question the solidity of the first, incline to retract it, and suspect that the whole is a juggle and a piece of impudence, as we threaten a common beggar with the stocks for following us to ask a second alms. This is, in fact, one source of the prevalence and deep root which envy has in the human mind: we are incredulous as to the truth and justice of the demands which are so often made upon our pity or our admiration; but let the distress or the merit be established beyond all controversy, and we open our hearts and purses on the spot, and sometimes run into the contrary extreme when charity or admiration becomes the fashion. No one envies the *Author of Waverley*, because all admire him, and are sensible that admire him how they will, they can never admire him enough. We do not envy the sun for shining, when we feel the benefit and see the light. When some persons start an injudicious parallel between him and Shakspeare, we then may grow jealous and uneasy, because this interferes with our older and more firmly rooted conviction of genius, and one which has stood a severer and surer test. Envy has, then, some connexion with a sense of justice—is a defence against imposture and quackery. Though we do not willingly give up the secret and silent consciousness of our own worth to vapouring and false pretences, we do homage to the true candidate for fame when he

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appears, and even exult and take a pride in our capacity to appreciate the highest desert. This is one reason why we do not envy the dead—less because they are removed out of our way, than because all doubt and diversity of opinion is dismissed from the question of their title to veneration and respect. Our tongue, having a license, grows wanton in their praise. We do not envy or stint our admiration of Rubens, because the mists of uncertainty or prejudice are withdrawn by the hand of time from the splendour of his works. Fame is to genius—

‘ Like to a gate of steel fronting the sun,  
That renders back its figure and its heat.’

We give full and unbounded scope to our impressions when they are confirmed by successive generations; as we form our opinions coldly and slowly while we are afraid our judgment may be reversed by posterity. We trust the testimony of ages, for it is true; we are no longer in pain lest we should be deceived by varnish and tinsel; and feel assured that the praise and the work are both sterling. In contemporary reputation, the greater and more transcendent the merit, the less is the envy attending it; which shows that this passion is not, after all, a mere barefaced hatred and detraction from acknowledged excellence. Mrs. Siddons was not an object of envy; her unrivalled powers defied competitors or gainsayers. If Kean had a party against him, it was composed of those who could not or would not see his merits through his defects; and in like manner, John Kemble's elevation to the tragic throne was not carried by loud and tumultuous acclamation, because the stately height which he attained was the gradual result of labour and study, and his style of acting did not flash with the inspiration of the God. We are backward to bestow a heaped measure of praise, whenever there is any inaptitude or incongruity that acts to damp or throw a stumbling-block in the way of our enthusiasm. Hence the jealousy and dislike shown towards upstart wealth, as we cannot in our imaginations reconcile the former poverty of the possessors with their present magnificence—we despise fortune-hunters in ambition as well as in love—and hence, no doubt, one strong ground of hereditary right. We acquiesce more readily in an assumption of superiority that in the first place implies no merit (which is a great relief to the baser sort), and in the second, that baffles opposition by seeming a thing inevitable, taken for granted, and transmitted in the common course of nature. In contested elections, where the precedence is understood to be awarded to rank and title, there is observed to be less acrimony and obstinacy than when it is supposed to depend on individual merit and fitness for the office; no one willingly allows another more ability or honesty than himself,



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but he cannot deny that another may be *better born*. Learning again is more freely admitted than genius, because it is of a more positive quality, and is felt to be less essentially a part of a man's self; and with regard to the grosser and more invidious distinction of wealth, it may be difficult to substitute any finer test of respectability for it, since it is hard to fathom the depth of a man's understanding, but the length of his purse is soon known; and besides, there is a little collusion in the case:—

'The learned pate ducks to the golden fool.'

We bow to a patron who gives us a good dinner and his countenance for our pains, and interest bribes and lulls envy asleep. The most painful kind of envy is the envy towards inferiors; for we cannot bear to think that a person (in other respects utterly insignificant) should have or seem to have an advantage over us in any thing we have set our hearts upon, and it strikes at the very root of our self-love to be foiled by those we despise. There is some dignity in a contest with power and acknowledged reputation: but a triumph over the sordid and the mean is itself a mortification, while a defeat is intolerable.

## PREJUDICE

*The Atlas.*

*April 11 and 18, 1830.*

PREJUDICE, in its ordinary and literal sense, is *prejudging* any question without having sufficiently examined it, and adhering to our opinion upon it through ignorance, malice, or perversity, in spite of every evidence to the contrary. The little that we know has a strong alloy of misgiving and uncertainty in it: the mass of things of which we have no means of judging, but of which we form a blind and confident opinion as if we were thoroughly acquainted with them, is monstrous. Prejudice is the child of ignorance; for as our actual knowledge falls short of our desire to know, or curiosity and interest in the world about us, so must we be tempted to decide upon a greater number of things at a venture; and having no check from reason or inquiry, we shall grow more obstinate and bigoted in our conclusions, according as they have been rash and presumptuous. The absence of proof, instead of suspending our judgments, only gives us an opportunity to make things out according to our wishes and fancies; mere ignorance is a blank canvas on which we lay what colours we please, and paint objects black or white, as angels or devils, magnify or diminish them at our option; and in the vacuum either of facts or arguments, the weight of prejudice and passion falls with double force, and bears down everything before it. If we enlarge the circle of our

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previous knowledge ever so little, we may meet with something to create doubt and difficulty; but as long as we remain confined to the cell of our native ignorance, while we know nothing beyond the routine of sense and custom, we shall refer everything to that standard, or make it out as we would have it to be, like spoiled children who have never been from home, and expect to find nothing in the world that does not accord with their wishes and notions. It is evident, that the fewer things we know, the more ready we shall be to pronounce upon and condemn what is new and strange to us; that is, the less capable we shall be of varying our conceptions, and the more prone to mistake a part for the whole. What we do not understand the meaning of must necessarily appear to us ridiculous and contemptible; and we do not stop to inquire, till we have been taught by repeated experiments and warnings of our own fallibility, whether the absurdity is in ourselves or in the object of our dislike and scorn. The most ignorant people are rude and insolent, as the most barbarous are cruel and ferocious. All our knowledge at first lying in a narrow compass (bounded by local and physical causes) whatever does not conform to this shocks us as out of reason and nature. The less we look abroad, the more our ideas are introverted; and our habitual impressions, from being made up of a few particulars always repeated, grow together into a kind of concrete substance, which will not bear taking to pieces, and where the smallest deviation destroys the whole feeling. Thus the difference of colour in a black man was thought to forfeit his title to belong to the species, till books of voyages and travels, and old Fuller's quaint expression of 'God's image carved in ebony,' have brought the two ideas into a forced union, and Mr. Murray no longer libels men of colour with impunity. The word *republic* has a harsh and incongruous sound to ears bred under a constitutional monarchy; and we strove hard for many years to overturn the French republic, merely because we could not reconcile it to ourselves that such a thing should exist at all, notwithstanding the examples of Holland, Switzerland, and many others. This term has hardly yet performed quarantine: to the loyal and patriotic it has an ugly taint in it, and is scarcely fit to be mentioned in good company. If, however, we are weaned by degrees from our prejudices against certain words that shock opinion, this is not the case with all; for those that offend good manners grow more offensive with the progress of refinement and civilization, so that no writer now dare venture upon expressions that unwittingly disfigure the pages of our elder writers, and in this respect, instead of becoming callous or indifferent, we appear to become more fastidious every day. There is then a real grossness which does not depend on familiarity or custom. This

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account of the concrete nature of prejudice, or of the manner in which our ideas by habit and the dearth of general information coalesce together into one indissoluble form, will show (what otherwise seems unaccountable) how such violent antipathies and animosities have been occasioned by the most ridiculous or trifling differences of opinion, or outward symbols of it; for, by constant custom, and the want of reflection, the most insignificant of these was as inseparably bound up with the main principle as the most important, and to give up any part was to give up the whole essence and vital interests of religion, morals, and government. Hence we see all sects and parties mutually insist on their own technical distinctions as the essentials and fundamentals of religion, and politics, and, for the slightest variation in any of these, unceremoniously attack their opponents as atheists and blasphemers, traitors and incendiaries. In fact, these minor points are laid hold of in preference, as being more obvious and tangible, and as leaving more room for the exercise of prejudice and passion. Another thing that makes our prejudices rancorous and inveterate, is, that as they are taken up without reason, they seem to be *self-evident*; and we thence conclude, that they not only are so to ourselves, but must be so to others, so that their differing from us is wilful, hypocritical, and malicious. The Inquisition never pretended to punish its victims for being heretics or infidels, but for avowing opinions which with their eyes open they knew to be false. That is, the whole of the Catholic faith, 'that one entire and perfect chrysolite,' appeared to them so completely without flaw and blameless, that they could not conceive how any one else could imagine it to be otherwise, except from stubbornness and contumacy, and would rather admit (to avoid so improbable a suggestion) that men went to a stake for an opinion, not which they held, but counterfeited, and were content to be burnt for the pleasure of playing the hypocrite. Nor is it wonderful that there should be so much repugnance to admit the existence of a serious doubt in matters of such vital and eternal interest, and on which the whole fabric of the church hinged, since the first doubt that was expressed on any single point drew all the rest after it; and the first person who started a conscientious scruple, and claimed the *trial by reason*, threw down, as if by a magic spell, the strongholds of bigotry and superstition, and transferred the determination of the issue from the blind tribunal of prejudice and implicit faith to a totally different ground, the fair and open field of argument and inquiry. On this ground a single champion is a match for thousands. The decision of the majority is not here enough: unanimity is absolutely necessary to infallibility; for the only secure plea on which such a preposterous pretension could be set up is, by

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taking it for granted that there can be no possible doubt entertained upon the subject, and by diverting men's minds from ever asking themselves the question of the truth of certain dogmas and mysteries, any more than whether *two and two make four*. Prejudice in short is egotism : we see a part, and substitute it for the whole ; a thing strikes us casually and by halves, and we would have the universe stand proxy for our decision, in order to rivet it more firmly in our own belief ; however insufficient or sinister the grounds of our opinions, we would persuade ourselves that they arise out of the strongest conviction, and are entitled to unqualified approbation ; slaves of our own prejudices, caprice, ignorance, we would be lords of the understandings and reason of others ; and (strange infatuation !) taking up an opinion solely from our own narrow and partial point of view, without consulting the feelings of others, or the reason of things, we are still uneasy if all the world do not come into our way of thinking.

The most dangerous enemies to established opinions are those who, by always defending them, call attention to their weak sides. The priests and politicians, in former times, were therefore wise in preventing the first approaches of innovation and inquiry ; in preserving inviolate the smallest link in the adamant chain with which they had bound the bodies and the souls of men ; in closing up every avenue or pore through which a doubt could creep in ; for they knew that through the slightest crevice floods of irreligion and heresy would break in like a tide. Hence the constant alarm at free discussion and inquiry ; hence the clamour against innovation and reform ; hence our dread and detestation of those who differ with us in opinion, for this at once puts us on the necessity of defending ourselves, or of owning ourselves weak or in the wrong, if we cannot, and converts that which was before a bed of roses, while we slept undisturbed upon it, into a cushion of thorns ; and hence our natural tenaciousness of those points which are most vulnerable, and of which we have no proof to offer ; for, as reason fails us, we are more annoyed by the objections and require to be soothed and supported by the concurrence of others. Bigotry and intolerance, which pass as synonymous, are, if rightly considered, a contradiction in terms ; for, if in drawing up the articles of our creed, we are blindly bigoted to our impressions and views, utterly disregarding all others, why should we afterwards be so haunted and disturbed by the last, as to wish to exterminate every difference of sentiment with fire and sword ? The difficulty is only solved by considering that unequal compound, the human mind, alternately swayed by individual biasses and abstract pretensions, and where reason so often panders to, or is made the puppet of, the will.

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To show at once the danger and extent of prejudice, it may be sufficient to observe that all our convictions, however arrived at, and whether founded on strict demonstration or the merest delusion, are crusted over with the same varnish of confidence and conceit, and afford the same firm footing both to our theories and practice; or if there be any difference, we are in general 'most ignorant of what we are most assured,' the strength of will and impatience of contradiction making up for the want of evidence. Mr. Burke says, that we ought to 'cherish our prejudices because they are prejudices'; but this view of the case will satisfy the demands of neither party, for prejudice is never easy unless it can pass itself off for reason, or abstract undeniable truth: and again, in the eye of reason, if all prejudices are to be equally respected as such, then the prejudices of others are right, and ours must in their turn be wrong. The great stumbling-block to candour and liberality is the difficulty of being fully possessed of the excellence of any opinion or pursuits of our own, without proportionably condemning whatever is opposed to it; nor can we admit the possibility that when our side of the shield is black, the other should be white. The largest part of our judgments is prompted by habit and passion; but because habit is like a second nature, and we necessarily approve what passion suggests, we will have it that they are founded entirely on reason and nature, and that all the world must be of the same opinion, unless they wilfully shut their eyes to the truth. Animals are free from prejudice, because they have no notion or care about anything beyond themselves, and have no wish to generalise or talk big on what does not concern them: man alone falls into absurdity and error by setting up a claim to superior wisdom and virtue, and to be a dictator and law-giver to all around him, and on all things that he has the remotest conception of. If mere prejudice were dumb, as well as deaf and blind, it would not so much signify; but as it is, each sect, age, country, profession, individual, is ready to prove that they are exclusively in the right, and to go together by the ears for it. 'Rings the earth with the vain stir?' It is the trick for each party to raise an outcry against prejudice; as by this they flatter themselves, and would have it supposed by others, that they are perfectly free from it, and have all the reason on their own side. It is easy indeed, to call names, or to separate the word *prejudice* from the word *reason*; but not so easy to separate the two things. Reason seems a very positive and palpable thing to those who have no notion of it but as expressing their own views and feelings; as prejudice is evidently a very gross and shocking absurdity (that no one can fall into who wishes to avoid it), as long as we continue to apply this term to the prejudices of other people. To

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suppose that we cannot make a mistake is the very way to run head-long into it; for, if the distinction were so broad and glaring as our self-conceit and dogmatism lead us to imagine it is, we could never, but by design, mistake truth for falsehood. Those, however, who think they can *make a clear stage of it*, and frame a set of opinions on all subjects by an appeal to reason alone, and without the smallest intermixture of custom, imagination, or passion, know just as little of themselves as they do of human nature. The best way to prevent our running into the wildest excesses of prejudice and the most dangerous aberrations from reason, is, not to represent the two things as having a great gulph between them, which it is impossible to pass without a violent effort, but to show that we are constantly (even when we think ourselves most secure) treading on the brink of a precipice; that custom, passion, imagination, insinuate themselves into and influence almost every judgment we pass or sentiment we indulge, and are a necessary help (as well as hindrance) to the human understanding; and that, to attempt to refer every question to abstract truth and precise definition, without allowing for the frailty of prejudice, which is the unavoidable consequence of the frailty and imperfection of reason, would be to unravel the whole web and texture of human understanding and society. Such daring anatomists of morals and philosophy think that the whole beauty of the mind consists in the skeleton; cut away, without remorse, all sentiment, fancy, taste, as superfluous excrescences; and, in their own eager, unfeeling pursuit of scientific truth and elementary principles, they 'murder to dissect.' But of this I may say something in another paper.

## PARTY SPIRIT

*The Atlas.*

*April 25, 1830.*

PARTY spirit is one of the *profoundnesses of Satan*, or in more modern language, one of the dexterous *equivokes* and contrivances of our self-love, to prove that we, and those who agree with us, combine all that is excellent and praise-worthy in our own persons (as in a ring-fence) and that all the vices and deformity of human nature take refuge with those who differ from us. It is extending and fortifying the principle of the *amour-propre*, by calling to its aid the *esprit de corps* and screening and surrounding our favourite propensities and obstinate caprices in the hollow squares or dense phalanxes of sects and parties. This is a happy mode of pampering our self-complacency, and persuading ourselves that we and those that side with us, are 'the salt of the earth'; of giving vent to the morbid humours of

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our pride, envy, and all uncharitableness, those natural secretions of the human heart, under the pretext of self-defence, the public safety, or a voice from Heaven, as it may happen; and of heaping every excellence into one scale, and throwing all the obloquy and contempt into the other, in virtue of a nick-name, a watch-word of party, a badge, the colour of a ribbon, the cut of a dress. We thus desolate the globe, or tear a country in pieces, to show that we are the only people fit to live in it; and fancy ourselves angels, while we are playing the devil. In this manner, the Huron devours the Iroquois, because he is an Iroquois, and the Iroquois the Huron for a similar reason; neither suspects that he does it, because he himself is a savage and no better than a wild beast; and is convinced in his own breast that the difference of name and tribe makes a total difference in the case. The Papist persecutes the Protestant, the Protestant persecutes the Papist in his turn; and each fancies that he has a plenary right to do so, while he keeps in view only the offensive epithet which 'cuts the common link of brotherhood between them.' The church of England ill-treated the Dissenters, and the Dissenters, when they had the opportunity, did not spare the church of England. The Whig calls the Tory a knave, the Tory compliments the Whig with the same title, and each thinks the abuse sticks to the party-name, and has nothing to do with himself or the generic name of *man*. On the contrary, it cuts both ways; but while the Whig says 'The Tory is a knave, because he is a Tory,' this is as much as to say, 'I cannot be a knave, because I am a Whig'; and by exaggerating the profligacy of his opponent, he imagines he is laying the sure foundation, and raising the lofty superstructure of his own praises. But if he says, which is the truth, 'The Tory is not a rascal because he is a Tory, but because human nature in power, and with the temptation, is a rascal,' then this would imply that the seeds of depravity are sown in his own bosom, and might shoot out into full growth and luxuriance if he got into place, which he does not wish to appear *till he does get into place*.

We may be intolerant even in advocating the cause of Toleration, and so bent on making proselytes to Free-thinking as to allow no one to think freely but ourselves. The most boundless liberality in appearance may amount in reality to the most monstrous ostracism of opinion—not in condemning this or that tenet, or standing up for this or that sect or party, but in assuming a supercilious superiority to all sects and parties alike, and proscribing in the lump and in one sweeping clause all arts, sciences, opinions, and pursuits but our own. Till the time of Locke and Toland a general toleration was never dreamt of: it was thought right on all hands to punish and discountenance heretics

## PARTY SPIRIT

and schismatics, but each party alternately claimed to be true Christians and orthodox believers. Daniel Defoe, who spent his whole life, and wasted his strength in asserting the right of the Dissenters to a toleration (and got no thanks for it but the pillory), was scandalized at the proposal of the general principle, and was equally strenuous in excluding Quakers, Anabaptists, Socinians, Sceptics, and all who did not agree in the *essentials* of Christianity, that is, who did not agree with him, from the benefit of such an indulgence to tender consciences. We wonder at the cruelties formerly practised upon the Jews: is there anything wonderful in it? They were at the time the only people to make a butt and a bugbear of, to set up as a mark of indignity and as a foil to our self-love, for the *feræ naturæ* principle that is within us and always craving its prey to hunt down, to worry and make sport of at discretion, and without mercy—the unvarying uniformity and implicit faith of the Catholic church had imposed silence, and put a curb on our jarring dissensions, heart-burnings, and ill-blood, so that we had no pretence for quarrelling among ourselves for the glory of God or the salvation of men:—a Jordanus Bruno, an Atheist or sorcerer, once in a way, would hardly suffice to stay the stomach of our theological rancour, we therefore fell with might and main upon the Jews as a *forlorn hope* in this dearth of objects of spite or zeal; or, as the whole of Europe was reconciled in the bosom of holy mother church, went to the holy land in search of a difference of opinion and a ground of mortal offence; but no sooner was there a division of the Christian world than Papist fell upon Protestant, Protestants upon schismatics, and schismatics upon one another, with the same loving fury as they had before fallen upon Turks and Jews. The disposition is always there, like a muzzled mastiff—the pretext only is wanting; and this is furnished by a name, which, as soon as it is affixed to different sects or parties, gives us a license, we think, to let loose upon them all our malevolence, domineering humour, love of power and wanton mischief, as if they were of different species. The sentiment of the pious English bishop was good, who, on seeing a criminal led to execution, exclaimed, ‘There goes my wicked self!’

If we look at common patriotism, it will furnish an illustration of party-spirit. One would think by an Englishman’s hatred of the French, and his readiness to die fighting with and for his countrymen, that all the nation were united as one man in heart and hand—and so they are in war-time—and as an exercise of their loyalty and courage; but let the crisis be over, and they cool wonderfully, begin to feel the distinctions of English, Irish, and Scotch, fall out among themselves upon some minor distinction; the same hand that was



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eager to shed the blood of a Frenchman will not give a crust of bread or a cup of cold water to a fellow-countryman in distress ; and the heroes who defended the wooden walls of Old England are left to expose their wounds and crippled limbs to gain a pittance from the passenger, or to perish of hunger, cold, and neglect in our highways. Such is the effect of our boasted nationality : it is active, fierce in doing mischief ; dormant, lukewarm in doing good. We may also see why the greatest stress is laid on trifles in religion, and why the most violent animosities arise out of the smallest differences in politics and religion. In the first place, it would never do to establish our superiority over others by the acquisition of greater virtues, or by discarding our vices ; but it is charming to do this by merely repeating a different *formula* of prayer, or turning to the east instead of the west. He should fight boldly for such a distinction, who is persuaded it will furnish him with a passport to the other world, and entitle him to look down on the rest of his fellows as *given over to perdition*. Secondly, we often hate those most with whom we have only a slight shade of difference, whether in politics or religion ; because as the whole is a contest for precedence and infallibility, we find it more difficult to draw the line of distinction where so many points are conceded, and are staggered in our conviction by the arguments of those whom we cannot despise as totally and incorrigibly in the wrong. The high-church party in Queen Anne's time were disposed to sacrifice the low church and Dissenters to the Papists, because they were more galled by their arguments and disconcerted with their pretensions. In private life, the reverse of the foregoing reasoning holds good ; that is, trades and professions present a direct contrast to sects and parties. A conformity in sentiment strengthens our party and opinion ; but those who have a similarity of pursuit are rivals in interest ; and hence the old maxim, that *two of a trade cannot agree*.

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It is a mistake to suppose that all prejudices are false, though it is not an easy matter to distinguish between true and false prejudice. Prejudice is properly an opinion or feeling, not for which there is no reason, but of which we cannot render a satisfactory account on the spot. It is not always possible to assign a 'reason for the faith that is in us,' not even if we take time and summon up all our strength ; but it does not therefore follow that our faith is hollow and unfounded. A false impression may be defined to be an effect without a cause, or without any adequate one ; but the effect may remain

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and be true, though the cause is concealed or forgotten. The grounds of our opinions and tastes may be deep, and be scattered over a large surface; they may be various, remote and complicated, but the result will be sound and true, if they have existed at all, though we may not be able to analyse them into classes, or to recall the particular time, place, and circumstances of each individual case or branch of the evidence. The materials of thought and feeling, the body of facts and experience, are infinite, are constantly going on around us, and acting to produce an impression of good or evil, of assent or dissent to certain inferences; but to require that we should be prepared to retain the whole of this mass of experience in our memory, to resolve it into its component parts, and be able to quote chapter and verse for every conclusion we unavoidably draw from it, or else to discard the whole together as unworthy the attention of a rational being, is to betray an utter ignorance both of the limits and the several uses of the human capacity. The *feeling* of the truth of anything, or the soundness of the judgment formed upon it from repeated, actual impressions, is one thing: the power of vindicating and enforcing it, by distinctly appealing to or explaining those impressions, is another. The most fluent talkers or most plausible reasoners are not always the justest thinkers.

To deny that we can, in a certain sense, know and be justified in believing anything of which we cannot give the complete demonstration, or the exact *why* and *how*, would only be to deny that the clown, the mechanic (and not even the greatest philosopher), can know the commonest thing; for in this new and dogmatical process of reasoning, the greatest philosopher can trace nothing *above*, nor proceed a single step without taking something for granted;<sup>1</sup> and it is well if he does not take more things for granted than the most vulgar and illiterate, and what he knows a great deal less about. A common mechanic can tell how to work an engine better than the mathematician who invented it. A peasant is able to foretell rain from the appearance of the clouds, because (time out of mind) he has seen that appearance followed by that consequence; and shall a pedant catechise him out of a conviction which he has found true in innumerable instances, because he does not understand the composition of the elements, or cannot put his notions into a logical shape?

<sup>1</sup> Berkeley, in his *Minute Philosopher*, attacks Dr. Halley, who had objected to faith and mysteries in religion, on this score; and contends that the mathematician, no less than the theologian, is obliged to presume on certain *postulates*, or to resort, before he could establish a single theorem, to a formal definition of those undefinable and hypothetical existences, points, lines, and surfaces; and, according to the ingenious and learned Bishop of Cloyne, *solids* would fare no better than *superficials* in this war of words and captious contradiction.

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There may also be some collateral circumstance (as the time of day), as well as the appearance of the clouds, which he may forget to state in accounting for his prediction; though, as it has been a part of his familiar experience, it has naturally guided him in forming it, whether he was aware of it or not. This comes under the head of the well-known principle of the *association of ideas*; by which certain impressions, from frequent recurrence, coalesce and act in unison truly and mechanically—that is, without our being conscious of anything but the general and settled result. On this principle it has been well said, that ‘there is nothing so true as habit’; but it is also blind: we feel and can produce a given effect from numberless repetitions of the same cause; but we neither inquire into the cause, nor advert to the mode. In learning any art or exercise, we are obliged to take lessons, to watch others, to proceed step by step, to attend to the details and means employed; but when we are masters of it, we take all this for granted, and do it without labour and without thought, by a kind of habitual instinct—that is, by the trains of our ideas and volitions having been directed uniformly, and at last flowing of themselves into the proper channel.

We never do anything well till we cease to think about the manner of doing it. This is the reason why it is so difficult for any but natives to speak a language correctly or idiomatically. They do not succeed in this from knowledge or reflection, but from inveterate custom, which is a cord that cannot be loosed. In fact, in all that we do, feel, or think, there is a leaven of *prejudice* (more or less extensive), *viz.*, something implied, of which we do not know or have forgotten the grounds.

If I am required to prove the possibility, or demonstrate the mode of whatever I do before I attempt it, I can neither speak, walk, nor see; nor have the use of my hands, senses, or common understanding. I do not know what muscles I use in walking, nor what organs I employ in speech: those who do, cannot speak or walk better on that account; nor can they tell how these organs and muscles themselves act. Can I not discover that one object is near, and another at a distance, from the *eye* alone, or from continual impressions of sense and custom concurring to make the distinction, without going through a course of perspective and optics?—or am I not to be allowed an opinion on the subject, or to act upon it, without being accused of being a very *prejudiced* and obstinate person? An artist knows that, to imitate an object in the horizon, he must use less colour; and the naturalist knows that this effect is produced by the intervention of a greater quantity of air: but a country fellow, who knows nothing of either circumstance, must not only be ignorant but

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a blockhead, if he could be persuaded that a hill ten miles off was close before him, only because he could not state the grounds of his opinion scientifically. Not only must we (if restricted to reason and philosophy) distrust the notices of sense, but we must also dismiss all that mass of knowledge and perception which falls under the head of *common sense* and *natural feeling*, which is made up of the strong and urgent, but undefined impressions of things upon us, and lies between the two extremes of absolute proof and the grossest ignorance. Many of these pass for instinctive principles and *innate ideas*; but there is nothing in them 'more than natural.'

Without the aid of prejudice and custom, I should not be able to find my way across the room; nor know how to conduct myself in any circumstances, nor what to feel in any relation of life. Reason may play the critic, and correct certain errors afterwards; but if we were to wait for its formal and absolute decisions in the shifting and multifarious combinations of human affairs, the world would stand still. Even men of science, after they have gone over the proofs a number of times, abridge the process, and *jump at a conclusion*: is it therefore false, because they have always found it to be true? Science after a certain time becomes presumption; and learning reposes in ignorance. It has been observed, that women have more *tact* and insight into character than men, that they find out a pedant, a pretender, a blockhead, sooner. The explanation is, that they trust more to the first impressions and natural indications of things, without troubling themselves with a learned theory of them; whereas men, affecting greater gravity, and thinking themselves bound to justify their opinions, are afraid to form any judgment at all, without the formality of proofs and definitions, and blunt the edge of their understandings, lest they should commit some mistake. They stay for facts, till it is too late to pronounce on the characters. Women are naturally physiognomists, and men phrenologists. The first judge by sensations; the last by rules. Prejudice is so far then an involuntary and stubborn *association of ideas*, of which we cannot assign the distinct grounds and origin; and the answer to the question, 'How do we know whether the prejudice is true or false?' depends chiefly on that other, whether the first connection between our ideas has been real or imaginary. This again resolves into the inquiry—Whether the subject in dispute falls under the province of our own experience, feeling, and observation, or is referable to the head of authority, tradition, and fanciful conjecture? Our practical conclusions are in this respect generally right; our speculative opinions are just as likely to be wrong. What we derive from our personal acquaintance with things (however narrow in its scope or imperfectly

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digested), is, for the most part, built on a solid foundation—that of Nature; it is in trusting to others (who give themselves out for guides and doctors) that we are *all abroad*, and at the mercy of quackery, impudence, and imposture. Any impression, however absurd, or however we may have imbibed it, by being repeated and indulged in, becomes an article of implicit and incorrigible belief. The point to consider is, how we have first taken it up, whether from ourselves or the arbitrary dictation of others. ‘Thus shall we try the doctrines, whether they be of nature or of man.’

So far then from the charge lying against vulgar and illiterate prejudice as the bane of truth and common sense, the argument turns the other way; for the greatest, the most solemn, and mischievous absurdities that mankind have been the dupes of, they have imbibed from the dogmatism and vanity or hypocrisy of the self-styled wise and learned, who have imposed profitable fictions upon them for self-evident truths, and contrived to enlarge their power with their pretensions to knowledge. Every boor sees that the sun shines above his head; that ‘the moon is made of green cheese,’ is a fable that has been taught him. Defoe says, that there were a hundred thousand stout country-fellows in his time ready to fight to the death against popery, without knowing whether popery was a man or a horse. This, then, was a prejudice that they did not fill up of their own heads. All the great points that men have founded a claim to superiority, wisdom, and illumination upon, that they have embroiled the world with, and made matters of the last importance, are what one age and country differ diametrically with each other about, have been successively and justly exploded, and have been the levers of opinion and the grounds of contention, precisely because, as their expounders and believers are equally in the dark about them, they rest wholly on the fluctuations of will and passion, and as they can neither be proved nor disproved, admit of the fiercest opposition or the most bigoted faith. In what ‘comes home to the business and bosoms of men,’ there is less of this uncertainty and presumption; and there, in the little world of our own knowledge and experience, we can hardly do better than attend to the ‘still, small voice’ of our own hearts and feelings, instead of being browbeat by the effrontery, or puzzled by the sneers and cavils of pedants and sophists, of whatever school or description.

If I take a prejudice against a person from his face, I shall very probably be in the right; if I take a prejudice against a person from hearsay, I shall quite as probably be in the wrong. We have a prejudice in favour of certain books, but it is hardly without knowledge, if we have read them with delight over and over again. Fame itself

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is a prejudice, though a fine one. Natural affection is a prejudice : for though we have cause to love our nearest connections better than others, we have no reason to think them better than others. The error here is, when that which is properly a dictate of the heart passes out of its sphere, and becomes an overweening decision of the understanding. So in like manner of the love of country ; and there is a prejudice in favour of virtue, genius, liberty, which (though it were possible) it would be a pity to destroy. The passions, such as avarice, ambition, love, &c., are prejudices, that is amply exaggerated views of certain objects, made up of habit and imagination beyond their real value ; but if we ask what is the real value of any object, independently of its connection with the power of habit, or its affording natural scope for the imagination, we shall perhaps be puzzled for an answer. To reduce things to the scale of abstract reason would be to annihilate our interest in them, instead of raising our affections to a higher standard ; and by striving to make man rational, we should leave him merely brutish.

Animals are without prejudice : they are not led away by authority or custom, but it is because they are gross, and incapable of being taught. It is, however, a mistake to imagine that only the vulgar and ignorant, who can give no account of their opinions, are the slaves of bigotry and prejudice ; the noisiest declaimers, the most subtle casuists, and most irrefragable doctors, are as far removed from the character of true philosophers, while they strain and pervert all their powers to prove some unintelligible dogma, instilled into their minds by early education, interest, or self-importance ; and if we say the peasant or artisan is a Mahometan because he is born in Turkey, or a papist because he is born in Italy, the mufti at Constantinople or the cardinal at Rome is so, for no better reason, in the midst of all his pride and learning. Mr. Hobbes used to say, that if he had read as much as others, he should have been as ignorant as they.

After all, most of our opinions are a mixture of reason and prejudice, experience and authority. We can only judge for ourselves in what concerns ourselves, and in things about us : and even there we must trust continually to established opinion and current report ; in higher and more abstruse points we must pin our faith still more on others. If we believe only what we know at first hand, without trusting to authority at all, we shall disbelieve a great many things that really exist ; and the suspicious coxcomb is as void of judgment as the credulous fool. My habitual conviction of the existence of such a place as Rome is not strengthened by my having seen it ; it might be almost said to be obscured and weakened, as the reality falls short of the imagination. I walk along the streets without

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fearing that the houses will fall on my head, though I have not examined their foundation ; and I believe firmly in the Newtonian system, though I have never read the *Principia*. In the former case, I argue that if the houses were inclined to fall they would not wait for me ; and in the latter I acquiesce in what all who have studied the subject, and are capable of understanding it, agree in, having no reason to suspect the contrary. That *the earth turns round* is agreeable to my understanding, though it shocks my sense, which is however too weak to grapple with so vast a question.

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### I

SERVILITY is a sort of bastard envy. We heap our whole stock of involuntary adulation on a single prominent figure, to have an excuse for withdrawing our notice from all other claims (perhaps juster and more galling ones), and in the hope of sharing a part of the applause as train-bearers.

### II

Admiration is catching by a certain sympathy. The vain admire the vain ; the morose are pleased with the morose ; nay, the selfish and cunning are charmed with the tricks and meanness of which they are witnesses, and may be in turn the dupes.

### III

Vanity is no proof of conceit. A vain man often accepts of praise as a cheap substitute for his own good opinion. He may think more highly of another, though he would be wounded to the quick if his own circle thought so. He knows the worthlessness and hollowness of the flattery to which he is accustomed, but his ear is tickled with the sound ; and the effeminate in this way can no more live without the incense of applause, than the effeminate in another can live without perfumes or any other customary indulgence of the senses. Such people would rather have the applause of fools than the approbation of the wise. It is a low and shallow ambition.

### IV

It was said of some one who had contrived to make himself popular abroad by getting into *hot water*, but who proved very troublesome and ungrateful when he came home—‘ We thought him a very persecuted man in India ’—the proper answer to which is, that there are some people who are good for nothing else but to be persecuted. They want some check to keep them in order.

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### V

It is a sort of gratuitous error in high life, that the poor are naturally thieves and beggars, just as the latter conceive that the rich are naturally proud and hard-hearted. Give a man who is starving a thousand a-year, and he will be no longer under a temptation to get himself hanged by stealing a leg of mutton for his dinner; he may still spend it in gaming, drinking, and the other vices of a gentleman, and not in *charity*, about which he before made such an outcry.

### VI

Do not confer benefits in the expectation of meeting with gratitude; and do not cease to confer them because you find those whom you have served ungrateful. Do what you think fit and right to please yourself; the generosity is not the less real, because it does not meet with a correspondent return. A man should study to get through the world as he gets through St. Giles's—with as little annoyance and interruption as possible from the shabbiness around him.

### VII

*Common-place* advisers and men of the world, are always pestering you to conform to their maxims and modes, just like the *barkers* in Monmouth-street, who stop the passengers by entreating them to turn in and *refit* at their second-hand repositories.

### VIII

The word *gentility* is constantly in the mouths of vulgar people; as quacks and pretenders are always talking of *genius*. Those who possess any real excellence think and say the least about it.

### IX

Taste is often envy in disguise: it turns into the art of reducing excellence within the smallest possible compass, or of finding out the *minimum* of pleasure. Some people admire only what is new and fashionable—the work of the day, of some popular author—the last and frothiest bubble that glitters on the surface of fashion. All the rest is gone by, ‘in the deep bosom of the ocean buried’; to allude to it is Gothic, to insist upon it odious. We have only to wait a week to be relieved of the hot-pressed page, of the vignette-title; and in the interim can look with sovereign contempt on the wide range of science, learning, art, and on those musty old writers who lived before the present age of novels. Peace be with their *manes*! There are others, on the contrary, to whom all the modern publications are



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anathema, a by-word—they get rid of this idle literature ‘at one fell swoop’—disqualify the present race from all pretensions whatever, get into a corner with an obscure writer, and devour the cobwebs and the page together, and pick out in the quaintest production, the quaintest passages, the merest *choke-pear*, which they think nobody can swallow but themselves.

### X

The source of the love of nature or of the country has never been explained so well as it might. The truth is this. Natural or inanimate objects please merely as objects of sense or contemplation, and we ask no return of the passion or admiration from them, so that we cannot be disappointed or distracted in our choice. If we are delighted with a flower or a tree, we are pleased with it *for its own sake*; nothing more is required to make our satisfaction complete; we do not ask the flower or tree whether it likes us again; and, therefore, wherever we can meet with the same or a similar object, we may reckon upon a recurrence of the same soothing emotion. Nature is the only mistress that smiles on us still the same; and does not repay admiration with scorn, love with hatred. She is faithful to us, as long as we are faithful to ourselves. Whereas, in regard to the human species, we have not so much to consider our own dispositions towards others, as theirs towards us; a thousand caprices, interests, and opinions, may intervene before the good understanding can be mutual; we not only cannot infer of one individual from another, but the same individual may change to-morrow: so that in our intercourse with the world, there is nothing but littleness, uncertainty, suspicion, and mortification, instead of the grandeur and repose of nature.

### XI

It has been objected to the soothing power of Nature, that it cannot take away the sharp pang of vehement distress, but rather bars the dart, and seems to smile in mockery of our anguish. But the same might be said of music, poetry, and friendship, which only tantalize and torment us by offering to divert our grief in its keenest paroxysms; but yet cannot be denied to be enviable resources and consolations of the human mind, when the bitterness of the moment has passed over.

### XII

Every one is a hero, the circumstances being given. All that is necessary is, that the outward impression should be so strong as to make a man forget himself. A woman rushes into the flames to save her child, not from duty or reason—but because the distracting terror

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for another banishes all recollection of, and fear for, herself. For the same reason, a person throws himself from a precipice, because the apprehension of danger gets the better of and confounds the sense of self-preservation. The doctrine of self-love, as an infallible metaphysical principle of action, is nonsense.

### XIII

The heroical ages were those in which there was a constant question between life and death, and men ate their scanty meal with their swords in their hands.

### XIV

The hero acts from outward impulse; the martyr from internal faith, and so far is the greater character of the two. And yet it may be doubted whether the latter is properly a voluntary agent, or whether, if he could do it unperceived, he would not abstract himself from the scene, instead of becoming a sacrifice and a witness to the truth.

### XV

What shews that persecution and danger act as incentives rather than impediments to the will, is that zeal generally goes out with the fires that kindle it; and we become indifferent to a cause, when life, property, and limb are no longer endangered. He is the real philosopher who loves truth for its own sake, not in the spirit of contradiction: he the genuine friend of freedom and justice who hates oppression and wrong after they have ceased, and as long as the very name of them remains, as well as while it is a bone of contention between infuriated sects and parties.

### XVI

If reform were to gain the day, reform would become as vulgar as cant of any other kind. We only shew a spirit of independence and resistance to power, as long as power is against us. As soon as the cause of opposition prevails, its essence and character are gone out of it; and the most flagrant *radicalism* degenerates into the tamest servility. We then say as others say; sail with the stream; no longer sacrifice interest to principle, but are in a pitiful majority. Had events taken a different turn in 1794, who can predict what the popular cry would have been? This may point out how little chance there is of any great improvement in the affairs of the world. Virtue ceases with difficulty; honesty is *militant*. The mass of mankind, who are governed by indolence and habit, fall in with existing events and interests; the imaginative and reasoning part fall out with facts

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and reality ; but could they have their way, and model the world at their pleasure, their occupation would be gone ; or if all governments were wise and good, the character of the patriot would become obsolete, and a sinecure. At present there is a very convenient division of labour ; and each class fulfils its vocation. It is essential to the triumph of reform that it should never succeed.

### XVII

We talk about the cant of politics or religion, as if there were no cant but that which is common to the multitude. But whenever any two individuals agree about any one thing, they begin to cant about it, and take the echo of one another's voices for the verdict of truth. Half-a-dozen persons will always make a *quorum* of credulity and vulgarity.

### XVIII

When people have done quarrelling about one set of questions they start another. Motion is necessary to mind as much as to matter ; and for 'an ultimate end,' Hobbes denies that there is any such thing. Hence the tendency to all Ultra opinions and measures ! Man is seldom contented to go as far as others, unless he can go beyond them, and make a caricature and a paradox even of the most vulgar prejudice. It is necessary to aim at some kind of distinction—to create some difficulty, were it only for the sake of overcoming it. Thus we find that O'Connell, having carried his cause, would not let the 'agitation' subside without turning it into a personal quarrel : the way was opened to him into the House, and he wanted to force his way there by an *ex post facto* inference ; the banns of marriage were published between him and parliament, and he would fain, with the petulance of opposition, *seize* a seat there.

### XIX

Truth itself becomes but a fashion. When all the world acknowledge it, it seems trite and stale. It is tinged by the coarse medium through which it passes.

### XX

Erasmus, in his 'Remains,' tells a story of two thieves, who were recommended by their mother to rob every one they met with ; but warned, on peril of their lives, to avoid one *Black-breeches* (Hercules). Meeting him, however, without knowing him, they set upon him, and were slung across his shoulder,—where Hercules heard them muttering behind his back, *a long way off*, 'This must surely be he that our mother warned us of.' In contempt and pity he let them escape.

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What modern wit can come up to the grotesque grandeur of this invention ?

### XXI

People addicted to secresy are so without knowing why ; they are so not 'for cause,' but for secresy's sake. It is a mixture of cowardice and conceit. They think, if they tell you any thing, you may understand it better than they do, or turn it in some way against them ; but that while they shut up their mouths they are wiser than you, just as liars think by telling you a falsehood they have an advantage over you. There are others who deal in significant nods, smiles, and half-sentences, so that you never can get at their meaning, and indeed they have none, but leave it to you to put what interpretation you please on their embryo hints and conceptions. They are glad to find a *proxy* for their want of understanding.

### XXII

It is the force and violence of the English mind that has put it into the safe custody of the law, and it is every man's disposition to act upon his own judgment and presumption, without regard to others, that has made it absolutely necessary to establish equal claims to curb them. We are too much in a state of nature to submit to what Burke calls 'the soft collar of social esteem,' and require 'the iron rod, the torturing hour,' to tame us. But though the foundations of liberty, life, and property, are formally secured in this way from the ebullitions of national character, yet the spirit breaks out upon the surface of manners, and is often spurted in our face. Lord Castlereagh was wrong in saying that 'liberty was merely a custom of England' ; it is the indigenous growth of our temper and our clime ; and woe to him who deprives us of the only amends for so many disadvantages and failings ! The wild beast roaming his native forests is respectable though formidable—shut up in Exeter 'Change, he is equally odious and wretched.

### XXIII

It was a long time made an argument for not throwing open the galleries of noblemen and others to the public, that if permission were given they would be filled with the lowest of the rabble, and with squalid wretches, who would run up against well-dressed people, and damage the works of art. Nothing could be more false than this theory, as experience has shown. It was in vain to quote the example of foreign countries, as it was said the common people there were kept more in subjection ; but if they are tamer, ours are prouder for that very reason. The National Gallery in Pall-Mall is now open

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to all the world ; and, except a shabby artist or two, who ever saw a soul there who was not, if not well-dressed, yet dressed in his best, and behaving with decency, instead of trying to turn the place into a bear-garden, as had been predicted.<sup>1</sup> People will not go out of their way to see pictures unless they have an interest in them, which gives the title, and is a security against ill consequences ; much less will any class of people obtrude themselves where they are pointed at as inferior to the rest of the company, or subject themselves to looks of scorn and disgust, to see any sights in the world. There is no man so poor or low but he loves himself better than pictures or statues ; and if he must get snubbed and treated with contempt to indulge his admiration of celebrated works, he will forego the latter. *Comparisons are odious* ; and we avoid them. The first object of every human being (high or low, great or small) is to stand well with himself, and to appear to the best advantage to others. A man is not very fond of passing along the streets in a thread-bare coat, and shoes with holes in them. Will he go in this trim into a group of well-dressed people to make himself ridiculous ? The mind, so far from being dull or callous on this point, is but too sensitive ; our jealousy of public opinion is the ruling passion, a morbid disease. Does not the consciousness of any singularity or impropriety of appearance immediately take off from our pleasure at a play ? How seldom we observe an interloper in the dress circle ; and how sure he is to pay for it ! If a man has any defect or inferiority, this is certain, he will keep it in the back-ground. If a chimney-sweeper or scavenger had a ticket to a ball, would he go ? Oh ! no ; it is enough to bear the sense of our own infirmity and disgrace in silence, and unnoticed, without having it wrought to agony by the glare of contrast and ostentation of insult ! What linendraper or grocer's son would dine with a prince every day though he might, to be crushed into insignificance, and stifled with ironical civility ? Do we not observe the difficulty there is in making servants and mechanics sit down, or keep on their hats in speaking to their *bettors*, for fear of being thought to encroach, and made liable to a rebuff in consequence ? Assuredly, then, the great may throw open their palace-doors and galleries of art without having to dread the inroad or outrages of the mob, or fancying that any one will go who is not qualified to appear, or will not come away with his mind and manners improved. The wooden shoes and mob caps in the Louvre or the Vatican do no harm to the pictures on the walls : but add a new interest to them, and throw a pleasing light on human

<sup>1</sup> If it were a show of wild-beasts, or a boxing-match, the reasoning might be somewhat different ; though I do not know that it would. No people behave better than the *gods* after the play once begins.

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nature. If we are behind other nations in politeness and civilization, the best way to overtake them is to tread in their steps.

### XXIV

It is at the same time true that *familiarity breeds contempt*; or that the vulgar, if admitted to an intimacy and footing of equality, try to make you feel all your defects, and to pay for the superiority you have so long usurped over them. The same pride that before kept them at a distance makes them ready to throw down any barrier of deference or distinction the moment they can do so with impunity. No one willingly admits a superiority in another; or does not secretly prefer himself to the whole universe beside. The slave would kill the tyrant, whose feet he kisses; and there is no Turk so loyal that he would not cut off the head of the best of Sultans, if he was sure of putting the diadem upon his own.

### XXV

The strongest minds are governed more by appearances than by a regard to consequences. Those who pretend to be the greatest calculators of their own interest, or the *main chance*, are the very slaves of opinion, and dupes of shallow pretension. They are often so mad in this respect, that they think neither better nor worse of the oldest friend they have in the world than the first person they happen to be in company with does, or the last rumour they heard gives him out. Their *circumspection* amounts to looking three ways at once, and missing the right point of view at last. They would rather speak to a well-dressed fool in the street than to the wisest man in a thread-bare suit. I know an author who succeeds with a set of second-hand thoughts by having a coat of the newest cut; and an editor, who flourishes about the town in virtue of a pair of green spectacles. Lay out all you are worth in decking out the person of a vulgar woman, and she will *cut* you in the very finery you have given her; lay it out on your own back, and she will be ambitious of your least notice. People judge of you not from what *they* know, but from the impression you make on others, which depends chiefly on professions, and on outward bearing and bravery. *De non apparentibus et non existentibus eadem est ratio*. If a man has no opinion of himself, how the deuce should any one else? It is like electing a person member of parliament who refuses to come forward as a candidate. On the other hand, let a man have impudence in lieu of all other qualifications, and he needs not despair. The part of quack or coxcomb is a favourite one with the town. The only character that is likely to get on by passing for a *poor creature* is the legacy-hunter. Nothing can be too low or

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insignificant for that. A man is only grateful to you in the other world for having been a foil to him in this. A miser (if he could) would leave his fortune to his dog, that no human being might be the better for it, or no one that he could envy in the possession of it, or think raised to an equality with himself.

### XXVI

We complain of old friends who have made their fortunes in the world and slighted us in their prosperity, without considering those who have been unsuccessful, and whom we have neglected in our turn. When our friends betray or desert us, we cling the closer to those that remain. Our confidence is strengthened by being circumscribed; we do not wish to give up a forlorn hope. With the crumbling and decayed fragments of friendship around us, we maintain our point to the last; like the cobbler, who kept his stall and cooked his beef-steak in the ruins of Drury-lane. Buonaparte used to speak of old generals and favourites who would not have abandoned him in his misfortunes if they had lived; it was perhaps well for them that they were dead. The list of traitors and the ungrateful is too much swelled without any probable additions to it.

### XXVII

When we hear of any base or shocking action or character, we think the better of ourselves; instead of which, we ought to think the worse. It strikes at the grounds of our faith in human nature. The reflection of the old divine was wiser on seeing a reprobate—‘There goes my wicked self!’

### XXVIII

Over-civility generally ends in impertinence; for as it proceeds from design, and not from any kindness or respect, it ceases with its object.

### XXIX

I am acquainted with but one person, of whom I feel quite sure that if he were to meet an old and tried friend in the street, he would go up and speak to him in the same manner, whether in the interim he had become a lord or a beggar. Upon reflection, I may add a second to the list. Such is my estimate of the permanence and sincerity of our most boasted virtues. ‘To be honest as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.’

### XXX

It has been said that family attachments are the only ones that

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stand the test of adversity, because the disgrace or misfortune is there in some measure reflected upon ourselves. A friend is no longer a friend, provided we choose to pick a quarrel with him; but we cannot so easily cut the link of relationship asunder. We therefore relieve the distresses of our near relations, or get them out of the way, lest they should shame us. But the sentiment is unnatural, and therefore must be untrue.

### XXXI

L—— said of some monkeys at a fair, that we were ashamed of their resemblance to ourselves on the same principle that we avoided *poor relations*.

### XXXII

Servants and others who consult only their ease and convenience, give a great deal of trouble by their carelessness and profligacy; those who take a pride in their work often carry it to excess, and plague you with constant advice and interference. Their duty gets so much a-head in their imagination, that it becomes their master, and your's too.

### XXXIII

There are persons who are never easy unless they are putting your books or papers in order, that is, according to their notions of the matter; and hide things lest they should be lost, where neither the owner nor any body else can find them. This is a sort of *magpie faculty*. If any thing is left where you want it, it is called making a *litter*. There is a pedantry in housewifery as in the gravest concerns. Abraham Tucker complained that whenever his maid-servant had been in his library, he could not set comfortably to work again for several days.

### XXXIV

True misanthropy consists not in pointing out the faults and follies of men, but in encouraging them in the pursuit. They who wish well to their fellow-creatures are angry at their vices and sore at their mishaps; he who flatters their errors and smiles at their ruin is their worst enemy. But men like the sycophant better than the plain-dealer, because they prefer their passions to their reason, and even to their interest.

### XXXV

I am not very patriotic in my notions, nor prejudiced in favour of my own countrymen; and one reason is, I wish to have as good an opinion as I can of human nature in general. If we are the paragons



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that some people would make us out, what must the rest of the world be? If we monopolize all the sense and virtue on the face of the globe, we 'leave others poor indeed,' without having a very great superabundance falling to our own share. Let them have a few advantages that we have not—grapes and the sun!

### XXXVI

When the Persian ambassador was at Edinburgh, an old Presbyterian lady, more full of zeal than discretion, fell upon him for his idolatrous belief, and said 'I hear you worship the sun!'—'In faith, Madam,' he replied, 'and so would you too if you had ever seen him!'

### XXXVII

'To be *direct* and honest is not safe,' says Iago. Shakspeare has here defined the nature of honesty, which seems to consist in the absence of any *indirect* or sinister bias. The honest man looks at and decides upon an object as it is in itself, without a view to consequences, and as if he himself were entirely out of the question; the prudent man considers only what others will think of it; the knave, how he can turn it to his own advantage or another's detriment, which he likes better. His straight-forward simplicity of character is the reverse of what is understood by the phrase, *a man of the world*: an honest man is independent of and abstracted from material ties. This character is owing chiefly to strong natural feeling and a love of right, partly to pride and obstinacy, and a want of discursiveness of imagination. It is not well to be too witty or too wise. In many circles (not including the night-cellar or a mess-table) a clever fellow means a rogue. According to the French proverb, '*Tout homme réfléchi est méchant.*' Your honest man often is, and is always set down as, no better than an ass.

### XXXVIII

A person who does not tell lies will not believe that others tell them. From old habit, he cannot break the connection between words and things. This is to labour under a great disadvantage in his transactions with *men of the world*: it is playing against sharpers with loaded dice. The secret of plausibility and success is *point-blanc lying*. The advantage which men of business have over the dreamers and sleep-walkers is not in knowing the exact state of a case, but in telling you with a grave face what it is not, to suit their own purposes. This is one obvious reason why students and book-worms are so often reduced to their last legs. Education (which is a study and disci-

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pline of abstract truth) is a diversion to the instinct of lying and a bar to fortune.

### XXXIX

Those who get their money as wits, spend it like fools.

### XL

It is not true that authors, artists, &c., are uniformly ill-paid; they are often improvident, and look upon an income as an estate. A literary man who has made even five or six hundred a-year for a length of time has only himself to blame if he has none of it left (a tradesman with the same annual profits would have been rich or independent); an artist who breaks for ten thousand pounds cannot surely lament the want of patronage. A sieve might as well petition against a dry season. Persons of talent and reputation do not make money, because they do not keep it; and they do not keep it, because they do not care about it till they feel the want of it—and then *the public stop payment*. The prudent and careful, even among players, lay by fortunes.

### XLI

In general, however, it is not to be expected that those should grow rich by a special Providence, whose first and last object is by every means and at every sacrifice to grow famous. Vanity and avarice have different goals and travel different roads. The man of genius produces that which others admire: the man of business that which they will buy. If the poet is delighted with the ideas of certain things, the reader is equally satisfied with the idea of them too. The man of genius does that which no one else but himself can do: the man of business gets his wealth from the joint mechanical drudgery of all whom he has the means to employ. Trade is the Briareus that works with a hundred hands. A popular author grew rich, because he seemed to have a hundred hands to write with: but he wanted another hand to say to his well-got gains, 'Come, let me clutch thee.' Nollekens made a fortune (how he saved it we know) by having blocks of marble to turn into sharp-looking busts (which required a capital), and by hiring a number of people to hack and hew them into shape. Sir Joshua made more money than West or Barry, partly because he was a better painter, partly because gentlemen like their own portraits better than those of prophet or apostle, saint or hero. What the individual wants, he will pay the highest price for: what is done for the public the State must pay for. How if they will not? The historical painter cannot make them; and if he persists in the attempt, must be contented to fall a martyr to it.

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It is some glory to fail in great designs ; and some punishment is due to having rashly or presumptuously embarked in them.

### XLII

It is some comfort to starve on a name : it is something to be a poor *gentleman* ; and your man of letters ' writes himself *armigero*, in any bond, warrant, or quittance.' In fixing on a profession for a child, it is a consideration not to place him in one in which he may not be thought good enough to sit down in any company. Miserable mortals that we are ! If you make a lawyer of him, he may become Lord Chancellor ; and then all his posterity are lords. How cheap and yet acceptable a thing is nobility in this country ! It does not date from Adam or the conquest. We need not laugh at Buonaparte's mushroom peers, who were something like Charlemagne's or the knights of King Arthur's round table.

### XLIII

We talk of the march of intellect, as if it only unfolded the knowledge of good : *the knowledge of evil*, which communicates with twenty times the rapidity, is never once hinted at. Eve's apple, the torch of Prometheus, and Pandora's box, are discarded as childish fables by our wise moderns.

### XLIV

As I write this, I hear out of the window a man beating his wife and calling her names. Is this what is meant by good-nature and domestic comfort ? Or is it that we have so little of these, ordinarily speaking, that we are astonished at the smallest instances of them ; and have never done *lauding* ourselves for the exclusive possession of them ?

### XLV

A man should never marry beneath his own rank in life—for *love*. It shews goodness of heart, but want of consideration ; and the very generosity of purpose will defeat itself. She may please him and be every way qualified to make him happy : but what will others think ? Can he with equal certainty of the issue introduce her to his friends and family ? If not, nothing is done ; for marriage is an artificial institution, and a wife a part of the machinery of society. We are not in a state of nature, to be quite free and unshackled to follow our spontaneous impulses. Nothing can reconcile the difficulty but a woman's being a paragon of wit or beauty ; but every man fancies his Dulcinea a paragon of wit or beauty. Without this, he will only

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(with the best intentions in the world) have entailed chagrin and mortification both on himself and her; and she will be as much excluded from society as if he had made her his mistress instead of his wife. She must either mope at home, or tie him to her apron-string; and he will drag a clog and a load through life, if he be not saddled with a scold and a tyrant to boot.

### XLVI

I believe in the theoretical benevolence, and practical malignity of man.

### XLVII

We pity those who lived three hundred years ago, as if the world was hardly then awake, and they were condemned to feel their way and drag out an inanimate existence in the obscure dawn of manners and civilization: *we* forsooth are at the meridian, and the ages that are to follow are dark night. But if there were any truth in our theory, we should be as much behind-hand and objects of scorn to those who are to come after us, as we have a fancied advantage over those that have preceded us. Supposing it to be a misfortune to have lived in the age of Raphael or Virgil, it would be desirable (if it were possible) still to postpone the period of our existence *sine die*: for the value of time must mount up, as it proceeds, through the positive, comparative, and superlative degrees. Common sense with a little reflection will teach us, that one age is as good as another; that in familiar phrase *we cannot have our cake and eat it*; and that there is no time like the time present, whether in the first, the tenth, or the twentieth century.

### XLVIII

The world does not start fair in the race of time: one country has run its course before another has set out or even been heard of. Riches, luxury, and the arts, reach their utmost height in one place, while the rest of the globe is in a crude and barbarous state; decline thenceforward, and can no more be resuscitated than the dead. The twelve old Etruscan cities are stone walls, surrounded with heaps of cinders: Rome is but the tomb of its ancient greatness. Venice, Genoa, are extinct; and there are those who think that England has had her day. She may exclaim in the words of Gray's *Bard*—‘To triumph and to die are mine.’ America is just setting out in the path of history, on the model of England, without a language of its own, and with a continent instead of an island to run its career in—like a novice in the art, who gets a larger canvass than his master ever had to cover with his second-hand designs.

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### XLIX

It was shrewdly observed that the ruin of states commences with the accumulation of people in great cities, which conceal and foster vice and profligacy.

### L

The world, said a sensible man, does not on the whole grow much worse, nor abandon itself to absolute licentiousness, because as people have children growing up, they do not wish them to be reprobates; but give them good advice and conceal their failings from them. This in each successive generation brings morality on its legs again, however sceptical in virtue or hardened in vice the old may become through habit or bad example.

### LI

As children puzzle you by asking explanations of what they do not understand, many grown people shine in company and triumph over their antagonists by dint of ignorance and conceit.

### LII

A certain bookseller wanted Northcote to write a history of art in all ages and countries, and in all its ramifications and collateral bearings. It would have taken a life to execute it; but the projector thought it was as easy to make the book as to draw up the title-page. Some minds are as sanguine from a want of imagination, as others are from an excess of it; they see no difficulty or objection in the way of what they undertake, and are blind to every thing but their own interest and wishes.

### LIII

An outcry is raised against the distresses of literature as a tax upon the public, and against the sums of money and unrepaid loans which authors borrow of strangers or friends. It is not considered that but for authors we should still have been in the hands of tyrants, who rioted in the spoil of widows and orphans, and swept the fortunes of individuals and the wealth of provinces into their pouch. It will be time enough to be alarmed when the *Literary Fund* has laid its iron grasp on fat abbey lands and portly monasteries for the poor brethren of the Muses, has establishments like those of the Franciscan and Dominican Friars for its hoary veterans or tender novices, and has laid half the property of the country under contribution. Authors are the *ideal* class of the present day, who supply the brains of the community with 'fancies and good-nights,' as the priests did of old; and who cultivating no goodly vineyard of their own to satisfy the wants of the body, are sometimes entitled, besides their pittance, to

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ask the protection of taste or liberality. After all, the fees of Parnassus are trifling in comparison with the toll of Purgatory.

### LIV

There are but few authors who should marry: they are already wedded to their studies and speculations. Those who are accustomed to the airy regions of poetry and romance, have a fanciful and peculiar standard of perfection of their own, to which realities can seldom come up; and disappointment, indifference, or disgust, is too often the result. Besides, their ideas and their intercourse with society make them fit for the highest matches. If an author, baulked of the goddess of his idolatry, marries an ignorant and narrow-minded person, they have no language in common: if she is a *blue-stocking*, they do nothing but wrangle. Neither have most writers the means to maintain a wife and family without difficulty. They have chosen their part, the pursuit of the intellectual and abstracted; and should not attempt to force the world of reality into a union with it, like mixing gold with clay. In this respect, the Romish priests were perhaps wiser. 'From every work they challenged *essoin* for contemplation's sake.' Yet their celibacy was but a compromise with their sloth and supposed sanctity. We must not contradict the course of nature, after all.

### LV

There is sometimes seen more natural ease and grace in a common gipsy-girl than in an English court-circle. To demand a reason why, is to ask why the strolling fortune-teller's hair and eyes are black, or her face oval.

### LVI

The greatest proof of pride is its being able to extinguish envy and jealousy. Vanity produces the latter effect on the continent.

### LVII

When you speak of the popular effect and enthusiasm produced by the ceremonies of the Catholic church, it is presently objected that all this faith and zeal is excited by mummary and superstition. I am ready to allow that; and when I find that truth and reason have the same homage and reverence paid to them as absurdity and falsehood, I shall think all the advantages are clearly on the side of the former. The processes of reason do not commonly afford the elements of passion as their result; and the object of strong and even lofty feeling seems to appeal rather to the grossness and incongruity of

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the senses and imagination, than to the clear and dry deductions of the understanding. Man has been truly defined a *religious animal*; but his faith and heavenward aspirations cease if you reduce him to a mere mathematical machine. The glory and the power of the true religion are in its enlisting the affections of man along with the understanding.

### LVIII

We are imposed upon by the affectation of grace and gentility only till we see the reality; and then we laugh at the counterfeit, and are surprised that we did not see through it before.

### LIX

English women, even of the highest rank, look like *dowdies* in Paris; or exactly as country-women do in London. It is a *rule-of-three* proportion. A French milliner or servant maid laughs (not without reason) at an English Duchess. The more our fair country-women dress *à la Française*, the more unlucky they seem; and the more foreign graces they give themselves, the more awkward they grow. They want the *tournure Française*. Oh! how we have 'melted, thawed, and dissolved into a dew,' to see a bustling, red-faced, bare-necked English Duchess, or banker's wife, come into a box at the French theatre, bedizened and bedaubed! My Lady-mayoreess or the Right Honourable the Countess Dowager of —, before she ventures on the word *vulgar*, or scorns her untitled and untutored neighbours as beneath her notice, should go to see *les Angloises pour rire*! That is the looking-glass for upstart wealth and inflated aristocracy.

### LX

The advantage of our nobility over the plebeian classes is said to be in the blood and in the breed—the Norman breed, we suppose—the high noses and arched eyebrows date from the Conquest. We plead guilty to the insinuation conveyed in the expression—'the coronet face'—and bow with some sort of pride to the pride of birth. But this hypothesis is hardly compatible with the evident improvement in the present generation of noblemen and gentlemen by the intermarriages with rich heiresses, or the beautiful Pamelas of an humbler stock. *Crossing the breed* has done much good; for the actual race of Bond-street loungers would make a very respectable regiment of grenadiers; and the satire on Beau Didapper, in Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, has lost its force.

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### LXI

The tone of society in Paris is very far from John Bullish. They do not ask what a man is worth, or whether his father is owner of a tin-mine or a borough—but what he has to say, whether he is amiable and *spirituel*. In that case (unless a marriage is on the *tapis*) no one inquires whether his account at his banker's is high or low; or whether he has come in his carriage or on foot. An English soldier of fortune, or a great traveller, is listened to with some attention as a *marked character*; while a booby lord is no more regarded than his own footman in livery. The blank after a man's name is expected to be filled up with talent or adventures, or he passes for what he really is, a cypher.

### LXII

Our young Englishmen in Paris do not make much figure in the society of Frenchmen of education and spirit. They stumble at the threshold in point of manners, dress, and conversation. They have not only to learn the language, but to *unlearn* almost every thing else. Both words and things are different in France; our raw recruits have to get rid of a host of prejudices, and they do it awkwardly and reluctantly, and if they attempt to make a regular stand, are presently out-voted. The terms *gothic* and *barbarous* are talismans to strike them dumb. There is, moreover, a clumsiness in both their wit and advances to familiarity, that the spiteful *brunettes* on the other side of the water do not comprehend, and that subjects them to constant sneers; and every step adds to their confusion and want of false confidence. But their lively antagonists are so flushed with victory and victims to their loquacity and charms, that they are not contented to lecture them on morals, metaphysics, sauces, and *virtu*, but proceed to teach them the true pronunciation and idiom of the English tongue. Thus a smart French widow having blundered by saying, 'I have never *made* a child'; and perceiving that it excited a smile, maintained, for three whole days, against a large company, that it was better than saying, 'I never *had* a child.'

### LXIII

The Parisian *trip* (say what they will) is not grace. It is the motion of a puppet, and may be mimicked, which grace *cannot*. It may be different from the high, heavy-heeled walk of the English-woman. Is it not equally remote from the step (if step it may be called) of an Andalusian girl?



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### LXIV

It has been often made a subject of dispute, What is the distinguishing characteristic of man? And the answer may, perhaps, be given that *he is the only animal that dresses*. He is the only being who is coxcomb enough not to go out of the world naked as he came into it; that is ashamed of what he really is, and proud of what he is not; and that tries to pass off an artificial disguise as himself. We may safely extend the old maxim, and say that it is the tailor that makes both the gentleman and the man. *Fine feathers make fine birds*—this lie is the motto of the human mind. Dress a fellow in sheepskin, and he is a clown—dress him in scarlet, and he is a gentleman. It is then the clothes that makes all the difference; and the moral agent is simply the lay-figure to hang them on. Man, in short, is the only creature in the known world, with whom appearances pass for realities, words for things; or that has the wit to find out his own defects, and the impudence and hypocrisy, by merely concealing them, to persuade himself and others that he has them not. Teniers's monkeys habited like monks, may be thought a satire on human nature—alas! it is a piece of natural history. The monks are the larger and more solemn species, to be sure. Swift has taken a good bird's-eye view of man's nature, by abstracting the habitual notions of size, and looking at it in *great* or in *little*: would that some one had the boldness and the art to do a similar service, by stripping off the coat from his back, the vizor from his thoughts, or by dressing up some other creature in similar mummery! It is not his body alone that he tampers with, and metamorphoses so successfully; he tricks out his mind and soul in borrowed finery, and in the admired costume of gravity and imposture. If he has a desire to commit a base or cruel action without remorse and with the applause of the spectators, he has only to throw the cloak of religion over it, and invoke Heaven to set its seal on a massacre or a robbery. At one time dirt, at another indecency, at another rapine, at a fourth rancorous malignity, is decked out and accredited in the garb of sanctity. The instant there is a flaw, a 'damned spot' to be concealed, it is glossed over with a doubtful name. Again, we dress up our enemies in nicknames, and they march to the stake as assuredly as in *san Benitos*. The words Heretic or Papist, Jew or Infidel, labelled on those who differ from us, stand us in lieu of sense or decency. If a man be mean, he sets up for economy; if selfish, he pretends to be prudent; if harsh, firm; and so on. What enormities, what follies are not undertaken for the love of glory?—and the worst of all, are said to be for the glory of God! Strange, that a reptile should wish to be thought an angel; or that he should not be content to writhe and grovel in his

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native earth, without aspiring to the skies ! It is from the love of dress and finery. He is the Chimney-sweeper on May-day all the year round ; the soot peeps through the rags and tinsel, and all the flowers of sentiment !

### LXV

The meaning of all which is, that man is the only hypocrite in the creation ; or that he is composed of two natures, the *ideal* and the *physical*, the one of which he is always trying to keep a secret from the other. He is the *Centaur not fabulous*.

### LXVI

A person who is full of secrets is a knave or a fool, or both.

### LXVII

The error of Mandeville, as well as of those opposed to him, is in concluding that man is a simple and not a compound being. The schoolmen and divines endeavour to prove that the gross and material part of his nature is a foreign admixture, distinct from and unworthy of the man himself. The misanthropes and sceptics, on the other hand, maintain the *falsity of all human virtues*, and that all that is not sensual and selfish is a mere theatrical deception. But in order that man should be a wholly and incorrigibly selfish being, he should be shut up like an oyster in its shell without any possible conception of what passes beyond the wall of his senses ; and the *feelers* of his mind should not extend their ramifications under any circumstance or in any manner, to the thoughts and sentiments of others. Shakspeare has expressed the matter better than the pedants on either side, who wish unreasonably to exalt or degrade human nature.—‘The web of our lives is as of a mingled yarn, good and ill together : our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not, and our vices would despair, if they were not cherished by our virtues.’

### LXVIII

People cry out against the preposterous absurdity of such representations as the German inventions of the *Devil's Elixir* and the *Bottle Imp*. Is it then a fiction that we see ? Or is it not rather a palpable reality that takes place every day and hour ? Who is there that is not haunted by some heated phantom of his brain, some wizard spell, that clings to him in spite of his will, and hurries him on to absurdity or ruin ? There is no machinery or phantasmagoria of a melo-drame, more extravagant than the workings of the passions. Mr. Farley may do his worst with scaly forms, with flames, and dragon's wings : but

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after all, the true demon is within us. How many, whose senses are shocked at the outward spectacle, and who turn away startled or disgusted might say, pointing to their bosoms, '*The moral is here !*'

### LXIX

Mr. L.— asked Sir Thomas — who had been intimate with the Prince, if it was true that he was so fine a gentleman as he was generally represented? Sir Thomas — made answer, that it was certainly true that the Prince was a very fine gentleman indeed: 'but,' added he, 'if I am to speak my mind, the finest gentleman I ever saw, was Sadi Baba, the ambassador to Constantinople, from the Usbek Tartars.'

### LXX

'Man is in no haste to be venerable.' At present, it seems as if there were no occasion to become so. People die as usual; but it is not the fashion to grow old. Formerly, men subsided and settled down into a respectable old age at forty, as they did into a bob-wig, and a brown coat and waistcoat of a certain cut. The father of a family no longer pretended to pass for a gay young fellow, after he had children grown up; and women dwindled, by regular and willing gradations, into mothers and grandmothers, transferring their charms and pretensions to a blooming posterity; but these things are never thought of now-a-days. A matron of sixty flaunts it in 'La Belle Assemblée's dresses for May': and certainly M. Stultz never inquires into the grand climacteric of his customers. Dress levels all ages as well as all ranks.

## HINTS TO PERSONS IN BUSINESS AND MEN OF THE WORLD,

### THE PROPERLY ATTENDING TO WHICH MAY SAVE THEM FROM LOSING HUNDREDS AND THOUSANDS

1. If you have been cheated once, be sure to trust the same person again, and make a confidant of him. For as long as you continue to do so, you think you may recover your losses and flatter yourself you have not been deceived. By stopping short, you incur a *dead loss*, and acknowledge yourself to have been in error—a thing not to be thought of by a man of business and common sense, any more than by a philosopher.

2. Trust to professions and appearances, and be on your guard against realities and performances. These last are only demand for

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payment at sight and leave no scope to the imagination; whereas the former keep the mind in a pleasing state of suspense and give a vast idea of the candidate for your favour and confidence.

3. Accordingly, if you find a person does his work, discharge him, and get a new hand. You know what the first is good for, and it is a dull business; but where you have made no trial, you may expect wonders. So the politicians discard the old and tried servants of the public to take up with any new adventurer who promises fair—professions are infinite, but service is limited; and besides, creates an uneasy sense of obligation.

4. If a person comes to your door in a smart gig, jockey boots, and green spectacles, give him credit for whatever he pretends to be, a great author or a squire of high degree. Take it for granted that he *must have* means to support such an appearance, though you know to a certainty that he has none, except what he levies as a tax on the folly and credulity of mankind, and that he must be in the fair way to ruin. He makes an *imposing* figure, and therefore cannot mean to impose. If another person presents himself in a plain dress and with an unassuming manner, send him about his business as a poor creature and a low fellow, who does not even pretend to any thing. Women of a certain class do not mind being *bilked* by a *swell*.

‘ And tradesmen born to be controul’d,  
Stoop to the forward and the bold.’

5. If you find a person tells lies, believe him—if he is plain and straitforward, turn a deaf ear to what he says, as there is neither interest to amuse nor impudence to browbeat. There is all the difference that there is between poetry and prose, which is just as great in business as it is in books.

6. If any one proposes a speculation to the moon, close with it—but if you are urged to engage in a certain and profitable undertaking or even to make use of property in your hands and not let it run to waste, make a thousand scruples and difficulties, and hold back as if some one wanted to push you over the edge of a precipice—for no other reason than the profound one that a certain profit without the risks of ruin does not imply that romantic interest and that spirit of gambling, which is the soul of commerce.

7. If you have had losses, stand *stock-still* and refuse to repair them. *When the steed is stolen, shut the stable-door.*

8. If you have not succeeded in some one thing, determine to do nothing. For by this means you seem to prove to yourself that if what you relied on did not succeed, nothing else can. Thus if a bookseller has lost by publishing heaps of trash, he should make a vow against

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having any thing to do with works that have common sense in them, as these must *a fortiori* be certain ruin.

9. If by putting a thousand pounds in your own pocket, another would gain a hundred, you should on the true principles of practical philosophy remain absolutely motionless and spell-bound—for the great object of all wealth is to obtain a superiority over others, and if you can keep them in suspense and torture, this is a temptation, which it would be madness and against all we see of the way of the world to forego. To serve yourself and help another at the same time is to play the game into his hands and become his tool.

10. If there is a prejudice against any one, believe it and act upon it as if it were true, though you know it to be false. If he is weak and dispirited, depress him still more : if he is in danger of ruin (through the fault of others or even your own), stretch out your hand, not to save him but to push him over, and then say it was impossible to help him. In doing all this, men of business think they are consulting their own interest, while they are in fact governed by pride, caprice, obstinacy, and fancy. They are in love with money—and, like other lovers, are capricious and headstrong, mad at disappointment, the slaves of suspicion and idle rumours, let go the substance to catch at the shadow, live in a dream (as much as the poet or alchemist), and in their anxious desires and feverish expectations, lose all judgment and common sense, though they suppose these qualities to be confined to themselves. There cannot be a greater mistake ; and the pointing it out may be of use both to them and others.

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WIT is the putting together in jest, *i.e.* in fancy, or in bare supposition, ideas between which there is a serious, *i.e.* a customary incompatibility, and by this pretended union, or juxta-position, to point out more strongly some lurking incongruity. Or, wit is the dividing a sentence or an object into a number of constituent parts, as suddenly and with the same vivacity of apprehension to compound them again with other objects, 'wherein the most distant resemblance or the most partial coincidence may be found.' It is the *polypus* power of the mind, by which a distinct life and meaning is imparted to the different parts of a sentence or object after they are severed from each other ; or it is the prism dividing the simplicity and candour of our ideas into a parcel of motley and variegated hues ; or it is the mirror broken into pieces, each fragment of which reflects a new light from surrounding objects ; or it is the untwisting the chain of our ideas, whereby each link is

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made to hook on more readily to others than when they were all bound up together by habit, and with a view to a *set* purpose. Ideas exist as a sort of *fixtures* in the understanding; they are like *moveables* (that will also unscrew and take to pieces) in the wit or fancy. If our grave notions were always well founded; if there were no aggregates of power, of prejudice, and absurdity; if the value and importance of an object went on increasing with the opinion entertained of it, and with the surrender of our faith, freedom, and every thing else to aggrandise it, then 'the squandering glances' of the wit, 'whereby the wise man's folly is anatomised,' would be as impertinent as they would be useless. But while gravity and imposture not only exist, but reign triumphant; while the proud, obstinate, sacred tumours rear their heads on high, and are trying to get a new lease of for ever and a day; then oh! for the Frenchman's art ('Voltaire's?—the same') to break the torpid spell, and reduce the bloated mass to its native insignificance! When a Ferdinand still rules, seated on his throne of darkness and blood, by English bayonets and by English gold (that have no mind to remove him thence) who is not glad that an Englishman has the wit and spirit to translate the title of *King Ferdinand* into *Thing Ferdinand*; and does not regret that, instead of pointing the public scorn and exciting an indignant smile, the stroke of wit has not the power to shatter, to wither, and annihilate in its lightning blaze the monstrous assumption, with all its open or covert abettors? This would be a *set-off*, indeed, to the joint efforts of pride, ignorance, and hypocrisy: as it is, wit plays its part, and does not play it ill, though it is too apt to cut both ways. It may be said that what I have just quoted is not an instance of the decomposition of an idea or word into its elements, and finding a solid sense hid in the unnoticed particles of wit, but is the addition of another element or letter. But it was the same lively perception of individual and salient points, that saw the word KING stuck up in capital letters, as it were, and like a transparency in the *Illuminated Missal* of the Fancy, that enabled the satirist to conjure up the letter T before it, and made the transition (urged by contempt) easy. For myself, with all my blind, rooted prejudices against the name, it would be long enough before I should hit upon so happy a mode of expressing them. My mind is not sufficiently alert and disengaged. I cannot run along the letters composing it like the spider along its web, to see what they are or how to combine them anew; I am crushed like the worm, and writhing beneath the load. I can give no reasons for the faith that is in me, unless I read a novel of Sir Walter's, but there I find plenty of examples to justify my hatred of kings in former times, and to prevent my wishing to 'revive the ancient spirit of loyalty' in this!

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Wit, then, according to this account of it, depends on the rapid analysis or solution of continuity in our ideas, which, by detaching, puts them into a condition to coalesce more readily with others, and form new and unexpected combinations : but does all analysis imply wit, or where is the difference ? Does the examining the flowers and leaves in the cover of a chair-bottom, or the several squares in a marble pavement, constitute wit ? Does looking through a microscope amount to it ? The painter analyses the face into features—nose, eyes, and mouth—the features into their component parts : but this process of observation and attention to details only leads him to discriminate more nicely, and not to confound objects. The mathematician *abstracts* in his reasonings, and considers the same line, now as forming the side of a triangle, now of a square figure ; but does he laugh at the discovery, or tell it to any one else as a monstrous good jest ? These questions require an answer ; and an evasive one will not do. With respect to the wit of words, the explanation is not difficult ; and if all wit were verbal, my task would be soon ended. For language, being in its own nature arbitrary and ambiguous ; or consisting of ‘ sounds significant,’ which are now applied to one thing, now to something wholly different and unconnected, the most opposite and jarring mixtures may be introduced into our ideas by making use of this medium which looks two ways at once, either by applying the same word to two different meanings, or by dividing it into several parts, each probably the sign of a different thing, and which may serve as the starting-post of a different set of associations. The very circumstance which at first one might suppose would convert all the world into punsters and word-catchers, and make a Babel and chaos of language, *viz.* the arbitrary and capricious nature of the symbols it uses, is that which prevents them from becoming so ; for words not being substantive things in themselves, and utterly valueless and unimportant except as the index of thought, the mind takes no notice of or lays no kind of stress upon them, passes on to what is to follow, uses them mechanically and almost unconsciously ; and thus the syllables of which a word may be composed, are lost in its known import, and the word itself in the general context. We may be said neither to hear nor see the words themselves ; we attend only to the inference, the intention they are meant to communicate. This merging of the sound in the sense, of the means in the end, both common sense, the business of life, and the limitation of the human faculties dictate. But men of wit and leisure are not contented with this ; in the discursiveness of their imaginations and with their mercurial spirits, they find it an amusement to attend not only to the conclusion or the meaning of words, but to criticise and have an eye to the words

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themselves. Dull, plodding people go no farther than the literal, or more properly, the practical sense; the parts of a word or phrase are *massed together* in their habitual conceptions; their rigid understandings are confined to the one meaning of any word predetermined by its place in the sentence, and they are propelled forward to the end without looking to the right or the left. The others, who are less the creatures of habit and have a greater quantity of disposable activity, take the same words out of harness, as it were, lend them wings, and flutter round them in all sorts of fantastic combinations, and in every direction that they choose to take. For instance: the word *elder* signifies in the dictionary either *age* or a certain sort of *tree* or *berry*; but if you mention *elder wine* all the other senses sink into the dictionary as superfluous and nonsensical, and you think only of the wine which happens to bear this name. It required, therefore, a man of Mr. Lamb's wit and disdain of the ordinary trammels of thought, to cut short a family dispute over some very excellent wine of this description, by saying, 'I wonder what it is that makes *elder wine* so very pleasant, when *elder brothers* are so extremely disagreeable?' *Compagnons du lys*, may mean either the *companions of the order of the flower-de-luce*, or the *companions of Ulysses*—who were transformed into swine—according as you lay the emphasis. The French wits, at the restoration of Louis XVIII., with admirable point and truth, applied it in this latter sense. Two things may thus meet, in the casual construction and artful encounters of language, wide as the poles asunder and yet perfectly alike; and this is the perfection of wit, when the physical sound is the same, the physical sense totally unlike, and the moral sense absolutely identical. What is it that in things supplies the want of the *double-entendre* of language?—ABSURDITY. And this is the very signification of the term. For it is only when the two contradictory natures are found in the same object that the verbal wit holds good, and the real wit or *jeu d'esprit* exists and may be brought out wherever this contradiction is obvious with or without the *jeu-de-mots* to assist it. We can comprehend how the evolving or disentangling an unexpected coincidence, hid under the same name, is full of ambiguity and surprise; but an absurdity may be written on the face of a thing without the help of language; and it is in detecting and embodying this that the finest wit lies. Language is merely one instrument or handle that forwards the operation: Fancy is the midwife of wit. But how?—If we look narrowly and attentively, we shall find that there is a language of things as well as words, and the same variety of meaning, a hidden and an obvious, a partial and a general one, in both the one and the other. For things, any more than words, are not detached, independent existences, but are con-



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nected and cohere together by habit and circumstances in certain sets of association, and consist of an alphabet, which is thus formed into words and regular propositions, which being once done and established as the understood order of the world, the particular ideas are either not noticed, or *determined* to a set purpose and 'foregone conclusion,' just as the letters of a word are sunk in the word, or the different possible meanings of a word adjusted by the context. One part of an object being habitually associated with others, or one object with a set of other objects, we *lump* the whole together, take the general rule for granted, and merge the details in a blind and confused idea of the aggregate result. This, then, is the province of wit; to penetrate through the disguise or crust with which indolence and custom 'skin and slur over' our ideas, to move this slough of prejudice, and to resolve these aggregates or bundles of things into their component parts by a more lively and unshackled conception of their distinctions, and the possible combinations of these, so as to throw a glancing and fortuitous light upon the whole. There is then, it is obvious, a *double meaning* in things or ideas as well as in words (each being ordinarily regarded by the mind merely as the mechanical signs or links to hold together other ideas connected with them)—and it is in detecting this *double meaning* that wit in either case is shown. Having no books at hand to refer to for examples, and in the dearth of imagination which I naturally labour under, I must look round the room in search of illustrations. I see a number of stars or diamond figures in the carpet, with the violent contrast of red and yellow and fantastic wreaths of flowers twined round them, without being able to extract either edification or a particle of amusement from them: a joint-stool and a fire-screen in a corner are equally silent on the subject—the first hint I receive (or glimmering of light) is from a pair of tongs which, placed formally astride on the fender, bear a sort of resemblance to the human figure called *long legs and no body*. The absurdity is not in the tongs (for that is their usual shape) but in the human figure which has borrowed a likeness foreign to itself. With this *contre-sens*, and the uneasiness and confusion in our habitual ideas which it excites, and the effort to clear up this by throwing it from us into a totally distinct class of objects, where by being made plain and palpable, it is proved to have nothing to do with that into which it has obtruded itself, and to which it makes pretensions, commences the operation of wit and the satisfaction it yields to the mind. This I think is the cause of the delightful nature of wit, and of its relieving, instead of aggravating, the pains of defect or deformity, by pointing it out in the most glaring colours, inasmuch as by so doing, we, as it were, completely detach the peccant part and restore the sense of

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propriety which, in its undetected and unprobed state, it was beginning to disturb. It is like taking a grain of sand out of the eye, a thorn out of the foot. We have discharged our mental reckoning, and had our revenge. Thus, when we say of a *snub-nose*, that it is like an ace of clubs, it is less out of spite to the individual than to vindicate and place beyond a doubt the propriety of our notions of form in general. Butler compares the knight's red, formal-set beard to a tile :—

' In cut and die so like a tile,  
A sudden view it would beguile; '

we laugh in reading this, but the triumph is less over the wretched precisian than it is the triumph of common sense. So Swift exclaims :—

' The house of brother Van I spy,  
In shape resembling a goose-pie.'

Here, if the satire was just, the characteristics of want of solidity, of incongruity, and fantastical arrangement were inherent in the building, and written on its front to the discerning eye, and only required to be brought out by the simile of the goose-pie, which is an immediate test and illustration (being an extreme case) of those qualities. The absurdity, which before was either admired, or only suspected, now stands revealed, and is turned into a laughing-stock, by the new version of the building into a goose-pie (as much as if the metamorphosis had been effected by a play of words, combining the most opposite things), for the mind in this case having narrowly escaped being imposed upon by taking a trumpery edifice for a stately pile, and perceiving the cheat, naturally wishes to cut short the dispute by finding out the most discordant object possible, and nicknames the building after it. There can be no farther question whether a goose-pie is a fine building. Butler compares the sun rising after the dark night to a lobster boiled, and 'turned from black to red.' This is equally mock-wit and mock-poetry, as the sun can neither be exalted nor degraded by the comparison. It is a play upon the ideas, like what we see in a play upon words, without meaning. In a pantomime at Sadler's Wells, some years ago, they improved upon this hint, and threw a young chimney-sweeper into a cauldron of boiling water, who came out a smart, dapper volunteer. This was *practical wit*; so that wit may exist not only without the play upon words, but even without the use of them. Hogarth may be cited as an instance, who abounds in wit almost as much as he does in humour, considering the inaptitude of the language he used, or in those double allusions which throw a reflected light upon the same object, according to Collins's description of wit,

' Like jewels in his crisped hair.'

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Mark Supple's calling out from the Gallery of the House of Commons — 'A song from Mr. Speaker!' when Addington was in the chair and there was a pause in the debate, was undoubtedly wit, though the relation of any such absurd circumstance actually taking place, would only have been humour. A gallant calling on a courtesan (for it is fair to illustrate these intricacies how we can) observed, 'he should only make her a present every other time.' She answered, 'Then come only every other time.' This appears to me to offer a sort of touchstone to the question. The sense here is, 'Don't come unless you pay.' There is no wit in this: the wit then consists in the mode of conveying the hint: let us see into what this resolves itself. The object is to point out as strongly as can be, the absurdity of not paying; and in order to do this, an impossibility is assumed by running a parallel on the phrases, 'paying every other time,' and 'coming every other time,' as if the coming went for nothing without paying, and thus, by the very contrast and contradiction in the terms, showing the most perfect contempt for the literal coming, of which the essence, *viz.*, paying, was left out. It is, in short, throwing the most killing scorn upon, and fairly annihilating the coming without paying, as if it were possible to come and not to come at the same time, by virtue of an identical proposition or form of speech applied to contrary things. The wit so far, then, consists in suggesting, or insinuating indirectly, an apparent coincidence between two things, to make the real incongruity, by the recoil of the imagination, more palpable than it could have been without this feigned and artificial approximation to an union between them. This makes the difference between jest and earnest, which is essential to all wit. It is only *make-believe*. It is a false pretence set up, or the making one thing pass in supposition for another, as a foil to the truth when the mask is removed. There need not be laughter, but there must be deception and surprise: otherwise, there can be no wit. When Archer, in order to bind the robbers, suddenly makes an excuse to call out to Dorinda, 'Pray lend me your garter, Madam,' this is both witty and laughable. Had there been any propriety in the proposal or chance of compliance with it, it would no longer have been a joke: had the question been quite absurd and uncalled-for, it would have been mere impudence and folly; but it is the mixture of sense and nonsense, that is, the pretext for the request in the fitness of a garter to answer the purpose in question, and the totally opposite train of associations between a lady's garter (particularly in the circumstances which had just happened in the play) and tying a rascally robber's hands behind his back, that produces the delightful *equivoque* and unction of the passage in Farquhar. It is laughable, because the train of inquiry it sets in

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motion is at once on pleasant and on forbidden ground. We did not laugh in the former case—'Then only come every other time'—because it was a mere ill-natured exposure of an absurdity, and there was an end of it: but here, the imagination courses up and down along a train of ideas, by which it is alternately repelled and attracted, and this produces the natural drollery or inherent ludicrousness. It is the difference between the wit of humour and the wit of sense. Once more, suppose you take a stupid, unmeaning likeness of a face, and throwing a wig over it, stick it on a peg, to make it look like a barber's block—this is wit without words. You give that which is stupid in itself the additional accompaniments of what is still more stupid, to enhance and verify the idea by a falsehood. We know the head so placed is not a barber's block; but it might, we see, very well pass for one. This is caricature or the *grotesque*. The face itself might be made infinitely laughable, and great humour be shown in the delineation of character: it is in combining this with other artificial and aggravating circumstances, or in the setting of this piece of lead that the wit appears.<sup>1</sup> RECAPITULATION. It is time to stop short in this list of digressions, and try to join the scattered threads together. We are too apt, both from the nature of language and the turn of modern philosophy, which reduces every thing to simple sensations, to consider whatever bears one name as one thing in itself, which prevents our ever properly understanding those *mixed modes* and various clusters of ideas, to which almost all language has a reference. Thus if we regard *wit* as something resembling a drop of quicksilver, or a spangle from off a cloak, a little nimble substance, that is pointed and glitters (we do not know how) we shall make no progress in analysing its varieties or its essence; it is a mere word or an atom: but if we suppose it to consist in, or be the result of, several sets and sorts of ideas combined together or acting upon each other (like the tunes and machinery of a barrel-organ) we may stand some chance of explaining and getting an insight into the process. Wit is not, then, a single idea or object, but it is one mode of viewing and representing nature, or the differences and similitudes, harmonies and discords in the links and chains of our ideas of things at large. If all our ideas were literal, physical, confined to a single impression of the object, there could be no faculty for, or possibility of, the existence of wit, for its first principle is *mocking* or making a jest of anything, and its first condition or postulate, therefore, is the distinction between jest and earnest. First of all, wit implies a jest, that is, the bringing forward a pretended or counterfeit illustration of a thing; which,

<sup>1</sup> The common trick of making an imitation of the human countenance with a napkin or the ends of the knuckles comes under the head of wit, not humour.

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being presently withdrawn, makes the naked truth more apparent by contrast. It is lessening and undermining our faith in any thing (in which the serious consists) by heightening or exaggerating the vividness of our idea of it, so as by carrying it to extremes to show the error in the first concoction, and from a received practical truth and object of grave assent, to turn it into a laughing stock to the fancy. This will apply to Archer and the lady's garter, which is ironical: but how does it connect with the comparison of Hudibras's beard to a tile, which is only an exaggeration; or the *Compagnons d'Ulysse*, which is meant for a literal and severe truth, as well as a play upon words? More generally then, wit is the conjuring up in the fancy any illustration of an idea by likeness, combination of other images, or by a form of words, that being intended to point out the *eccentricity* or departure of the original idea from the class to which it belongs, does so by referring it contingently and obliquely to a totally opposite class, where the surprise and mere possibility of finding it, proves the inherent want of congruity. Hudibras's beard is transformed (by wit) into a tile: a strong man is transformed (by imagination) into a tower. The objects, you will say, are unlike in both cases; yet the comparison in one case is meant seriously, in the other it is merely to tantalize. The imagination is serious, even to passion, and exceeds truth by laying a greater stress on the object; wit has no feeling but contempt, and exceeds truth to make light of it. In a poetical comparison there cannot be a sense of incongruity or surprise; in a witty one there must. The reason is this: It is granted stone is not flesh, a tile is not hair, but the associated feelings are alike, and naturally coalesce in one instance, and are discordant and only forced together by a trick of style in the other. But how can that be, if the objects occasioning these feelings are equally dissimilar?—Because the qualities of stiffness or squareness and colour, objected to in Hudibras's beard, are themselves peculiarities and oddities in a beard, or contrary to the nature or to our habitual notion of that class of objects; and consequently (not being natural or rightful properties of a beard) must be found in the highest degree in, and admit of, a grotesque and irregular comparison with a class of objects, of which squareness and redness<sup>1</sup> are the essential characteristics (as of a tile), and which can have, accordingly, no common point of union in general qualities or feeling with the first class, but where the ridicule must be just and pointed from this very circumstance, that is, from the coincidence in that one particular only, which is the flaw and singularity of the first object. On the other hand, size and strength, which are the qualities on which the comparison of a man to a tower hinges, are not repugnant to the general

<sup>1</sup> A red beard is not uncommon, but it is odious.

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constitution of man, but familiarly associated with our ideas of him : so that there is here no sense of impropriety in the object, nor of incongruity or surprise in the comparison : all is grave and decorous, and instead of burlesque, bears the aspect of a loftier truth. But if strength and magnitude fall within our ordinary contemplations of man as things not out of the course of nature, whereby he is enabled, with the help of imagination, to rival a tower of brass or stone, are not littleness and weakness the counterpart of these, and subject to the same rule ? What shall we say, then, to the comparison of a dwarf to a pigmy, or to Falstaff's comparison of Silence to 'a forked radish, or a man made after supper of a cheese-paring' ? Once more then, strength and magnitude are qualities which impress the imagination in a powerful and substantive manner ; if they are an excess above the ordinary or average standard, it is an excess to which we lend a ready and admiring belief, that is, we *will* them to be if they are not, because they *ought to be*—whereas, in the other case of peculiarity and defect, the mind is constantly at war with the impression before it ; our affections do not tend that way ; we will it *not* to be ; reject, detach, and discard it from the object as much and as far as possible ; and therefore it is, that there being no voluntary coherence but a constant repugnance between the peculiarity (as of *squareness*) and the object (as a *beard*), the idea of a beard as being both naturally and properly of a certain form and texture remains as remote as ever from that of a tile ; and hence the double problem is solved, why the mind is at once surprised and not shocked by the allusion ; for first, the mind being made to see a beard so unlike a beard, is glad to have the discordance increased and put beyond controversy, by comparing it to something still more unlike one, *viz.* a tile ; and secondly, *squareness* never having been admitted as a desirable and accredited property of a beard as it is of a tile, by which the two classes of ideas might have been reconciled and compromised (like those of a man and a tower) through a feeling or quality common (in *will*) to both, the transition from one to the other continues as new and startling, that is, as witty as ever ;—*which was to be demonstrated*. I think I see my way clearly so far. Wit consists in two things, the perceiving the incongruity between an object and the class to which it generally belongs, and secondly, the pointing out or making this incongruity more manifest, by transposing it to a totally different class of objects in which it is prescriptively found in perfection. The medium or link of connexion between the opposite classes of ideas is in the unlikeness of one of the things in question *to itself*, *i.e.* the class it belongs to : this peculiarity is the narrow bridge or line along which the fancy runs to link it to a set of objects in all other respects differ-

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ent from the first, and having no sort of communication, either in fact or inclination, with it, and in which the pointedness and brilliancy, or the *surprise* and *contrast* of wit consists. The faculty by which this is done is the rapid, careless decomposition and recomposition of our ideas, by means of which we easily and clearly detach certain links in the chain of our associations from the place where they stand, and where they have an infirm footing, and join them on to others, to show how little intimacy they had with the former set.

The motto of wit seems to be, *Light come, light go*. A touch is sufficient to dis sever what already hangs so loose as folly, like froth on the surface of the wave; and an hyperbole, an impossibility, a pun or a nick-name will push an absurdity, which is close upon the verge of it, over the precipice. It is astonishing how much wit or laughter there is in the world—it is one of the staple commodities of daily life—and yet, being excited by what is *out of the way* and singular, it ought to be rare, and gravity should be the order of the day. Its constant recurrence from the most trifling and trivial causes, shows that the contradiction is less to what we find things than to what we wish them to be. A circle of milliner's-girls laugh all day long at nothing, or day after day at the same things—the same cant phrase supplies the wags of the town with wit for a month—the same set of nick-names has served the *John Bull* and *Blackwood's Magazine* ever since they started. It would appear by this that its essence consisted in monotony, rather than variety. Some kind of incongruity however seems inseparable from it, either in the object or language. For instance, admiration and flattery become wit by being expressed in a quaint and abrupt way. Thus, when the dustman complimented the Duchess of Devonshire by saying, as she passed, 'I wish that lady would let me light my pipe at her eyes,' nothing was meant less than to ridicule or throw contempt, yet the speech was wit and not serious flattery. The putting a wig on a stupid face and setting it on a barber's pole is wit or humour:—the fixing a pair of wings on a beautiful figure to make it look more like an angel is poetry; so that the *grotesque* is either serious or ludicrous, as it professes to exalt or degrade. Whenever any thing is proposed to be *done* in the way of wit, it must be in mockery or jest; since if it were a probable or becoming action, there would be no drollery in suggesting it; but this does not apply to illustrations by comparison, there is here no line drawn between what is to take place and what is not to take place—they must only be extreme and unexpected. Mere nonsense, however, is not wit. For however slight the connexion, it will never do to have none at all; and the more fine and fragile it is in some respects, the more close and deceitful it should be in the particular

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one insisted on. Farther, mere sense is not wit. Logical subtilty or ingenuity does not amount to wit (although it may mimic it) without an immediate play of fancy, which is a totally different thing. The comparing the phrenologist's division of the same portion of the brain into the organs of form and colour to the cutting a Yorkshire pudding into two parts, and calling the one *custard* and the other *plum-cake*, may pass for wit with some, but not with me. I protest (if required) against having a grain of wit.<sup>1</sup>

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'Thy wish was father, Harry, to that thought.'

It is an axiom in modern philosophy (among many other false ones) that belief is absolutely involuntary, since we draw our inferences from the premises laid before us and cannot possibly receive any other impression of things than that which they naturally make upon us. This theory, that the understanding is purely passive in the reception of truth, and that our convictions are not in the power of our will, was probably first invented or insisted upon as a screen against religious persecution, and as an answer to those who imputed bad

<sup>1</sup> Some one compared B——, a tall, awkward country lout to Adam, who came into the world full grown, but without having ever made any use of his limbs. 'This was wit, though true; where then is the ingredient of incongruity? In altering the idea of Adam at pleasure, or from a mere possibility to make it answer a ludicrous purpose. Adam is generally supposed an active, graceful person: a lad grown up with large bones and muscles, with no more use of them than an infant, is a laughable subject, because it deranges or unhinges our customary associations. The threads of our ideas (so to speak) are strong and tightened by habit and will, just as we tighten the strings of a fiddle with pegs and screws; and when any of these are relaxed, snapped asunder, or unstrung by accident or folly, it is in taking up the odds and ends (like stitches let down) as they hang light and loose, and twisting them into some motley, ill-assorted pattern, so as to present a fantastic and glaring contrast to custom (which is plain sense) or the *ideal*, which strengthens and harmonizes (and which is poetry)—that the web of wit and humour consists. The *serious* is that which is closely cemented together by experience and prejudice, or by common sense: the ludicrous is the incoherent, or that which wants the cement of habit and purpose; and wit is employed in finding out new and opposite combinations of these detached and broken fragments (or exceptions to established rules) so as to set off the distinction between absurdity and propriety in the most lively and marked manner possible. Proof is not wanted here; illustration is enough, and the more extravagant the better; for the cause being previously condemned in our prosing judgments, we do not stand upon punctilio, but only wait for a smart, sly excuse to get rid of it; and hence *tricking is fair in wit*, as well as in war: where the justice of the cause is not the question, you have only to fight it out or make the best of the case you can.



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motives to all who differed from the established faith, and thought they could reform heresy and impiety by the application of fire and the sword. No doubt, that is not the way: for the will in that case irritates itself and grows refractory against the doctrines thus absurdly forced upon it; and as it has been said, the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. But though force and terror may not be always the surest way to make converts, it does not follow that there may not be other means of influencing our opinions, besides the naked and abstract evidence for any proposition: the sun melts the resolution which the storm could not shake. In such points as, whether an object is black or white, or whether two and two make four,<sup>1</sup> we may not be able to believe as we please or to deny the evidence of our reason and senses: but in those points on which mankind differ, or where we can be at all in suspense as to which side we shall take, the truth is not quite so plain or palpable; it admits of a variety of views and shades of colouring, and it should appear that we can dwell upon whichever of these we choose, and heighten or soften the circumstances adduced in proof, according as passion and inclination throw their casting-weight into the scale. Let any one, for instance, have been brought up in an opinion, let him have remained in it all his life, let him have attached all his notions of respectability, of the approbation of his fellow-citizens or his own self-esteem to it, let him then first hear it called in question and a strong and unforeseen objection stated to it, will not this startle and shock him as if he had seen a spectre, and will he not struggle to resist the arguments that would unsettle his habitual convictions, as he would resist the divorcing of soul and body? Will he come to the consideration of the question impartially, indifferently, and without any wrong bias, or give the painful and revolting truth the same cordial welcome as the long-cherished and favourite prejudice? To say that the truth or falsehood of a proposition is the only circumstance that gains it admittance into the mind, independently of the pleasure or pain it affords us, is itself an assertion made in pure caprice or desperation. A person may have a profession or employment connected with a certain belief, it may be the means of livelihood to him, and the changing it may require considerable sacrifices or may leave him almost without resource (to say nothing of mortified pride)—this will not mend the matter. The evidence against his former opinion may be so strong (or may appear so to him) that he may be obliged to give it up, but not without a pang and after having tried every artifice and strained every nerve to give the utmost weight to the arguments

<sup>1</sup> Hobbes is of opinion that men would deny this, if they had any interest in doing so.

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favouring his own side, and to make light of and throw those against him into the background. And nine times in ten this bias of the will and tampering with the proofs will prevail. It is only with very vigorous or very candid minds, that the understanding exercises its just and boasted prerogative and induces its votaries to relinquish a profitable delusion and embrace the dowerless truth. Even then they have the sober and discreet part of the world, all the *bons pères de famille*, who look principally to the main chance, against them, and they are regarded as little better than lunatics or profligates to fling up a good salary and a provision for themselves and families for the sake of that foolish thing, a *Conscience*! With the herd, belief on all abstract and disputed topics is voluntary, that is, is determined by considerations of personal ease and convenience, in the teeth of logical analysis and demonstration, which are set aside as mere waste of words. In short, generally speaking, people stick to an opinion that they have long supported and that supports them. How else shall we account for the regular order and progression of society: for the maintenance of certain opinions in particular professions and classes of men, as we keep water in cisterns, till in fact they stagnate and corrupt: and that the world and every individual in it is not 'blown about with every wind of doctrine' and whisper of uncertainty? There is some more solid ballast required to keep things in their established order than the restless fluctuation of opinion and 'infinite agitation of wit.' We find that people in Protestant countries continue Protestants and in Catholic countries Papists. This, it may be answered, is owing to the ignorance of the great mass of them; but is their faith less bigoted, because it is not founded on a regular investigation of the proofs, and is merely an obstinate determination to believe what they have been told and accustomed to believe? Or is it not the same with the doctors of the church and its most learned champions, who read the same texts, turn over the same authorities, and discuss the same knotty points through their whole lives, only to arrive at opposite conclusions? How few are shaken in their opinions, or have the grace to confess it! Shall we then suppose them all impostors, and that they keep up the farce of a system, of which they do not believe a syllable? Far from it: there may be individual instances, but the generality are not only sincere but bigots. Those who are unbelievers and hypocrites scarcely know it themselves, or if a man is not quite a knave, what pains will he not take to make a fool of his reason, that his opinions may tally with his professions? Is there then a Papist and a Protestant understanding—one prepared to receive the doctrine of transubstantiation and the other to reject it? No such thing: but in either case the ground of reason is pre-

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occupied by passion, habit, example—the *scales are falsified*. Nothing can therefore be more inconsequential than to bring the authority of great names in favour of opinions long established and universally received. Cicero's being a Pagan was no proof in support of the Heathen mythology, but simply of his being born at Rome before the Christian era; though his lurking scepticism on the subject and sneers at the augurs told against it, for this was an acknowledgment drawn from him in spite of a prevailing prejudice. Sir Isaac Newton and Napier of Marchistoun both wrote on the *Apocalypse*; but this is neither a ground for a speedy anticipation of the Millennium, nor does it invalidate the doctrine of the gravitation of the planets or the theory of logarithms. One party would borrow the sanction of these great names in support of their wildest and most mystical opinions; others would arraign them of folly and weakness for having attended to such subjects at all. Neither inference is just. It is a simple question of chronology, or of the time when these celebrated mathematicians lived, and of the studies and pursuits which were then chiefly in vogue. The wisest man is the slave of opinion, except on one or two points on which he strikes out a light for himself and holds a torch to the rest of the world. But we are disposed to make it out that all opinions are the result of reason, because they profess to be so; and when they are *right*, that is, when they agree with ours, that there can be no alloy of human frailty or perversity in them; the very strength of our prejudice making it pass for pure reason, and leading us to attribute any deviation from it to bad faith or some unaccountable singularity or infatuation. *Alas, poor human nature!* Opinion is for the most part only a battle, in which we take part and defend the side we have adopted, in the one case or the other, with a view to share the honour or the spoil. Few will stand up for a losing cause or have the fortitude to adhere to a proscribed opinion; and when they do, it is not always from superior strength of understanding or a disinterested love of truth, but from obstinacy and sullenness of temper. To affirm that we do not cultivate an acquaintance with truth as she presents herself to us in a more or less pleasing shape, or is shabbily attired or well-dressed, is as much as to say that we do not shut our eyes to the light when it dazzles us, or withdraw our hands from the fire when it scorches us.

‘ Masterless passion sways us to the mood  
Of what it likes or loathes.’

Are we not averse to believe bad news relating to ourselves—forward enough if it relates to others? If something is said reflecting on the character of an intimate friend or near relative, how unwilling we are

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to lend an ear to it, how we catch at every excuse or palliating circumstance, and hold out against the clearest proof, while we instantly believe any idle report against an enemy, magnify the commonest trifles into crimes, and torture the evidence against him to our heart's content! Do not we change our opinion of the same person, and make him out to be *black* or *white* according to the terms we happen to be on? If we have a favourite author, do we not exaggerate his beauties and pass over his defects, and *vice versâ*? The human mind plays the interested advocate much oftener than the upright and inflexible judge, in the colouring and relief it gives to the facts brought before it. We believe things not more because they are true or probable, than because we desire, or (if the imagination once takes that turn) because we dread them. 'Fear has more devils than vast hell can hold.' The sanguine always hope, the gloomy always despond, from temperament and not from fore-thought. Do we not disguise the plainest facts from ourselves if they are disagreeable. Do we not flatter ourselves with impossibilities? What girl does not look in the glass to persuade herself she is handsome? What woman ever believes herself old, or does not hate to be called so: though she knows the exact year and day of her age, the more she tries to keep up the appearance of youth to herself and others? What lover would ever acknowledge a flaw in the character of his mistress, or would not construe her turning her back on him into a proof of attachment? The story of *January and May* is pat to our purpose; for the credulity of mankind as to what touches our inclinations has been proverbial in all ages: yet we are told that the mind is passive in making up these wilful accounts, and is guided by nothing but the *pros* and *cons* of evidence. Even in action and where we still may determine by proper precaution the event of things, instead of being compelled to shut our eyes to what we cannot help, we still are the dupes of the feeling of the moment, and prefer amusing ourselves with fair appearances to securing more solid benefits by a sacrifice of Imagination and stubborn Will to Truth. The blindness of passion to the most obvious and well known consequences is deplorable. There seems to be a particular fatality in this respect. Because a thing is in our power *till* we have committed ourselves, we appear to dally, to trifle with, to make light of it, and to think it will still be in our power *after* we have committed ourselves. Strange perversion of the reasoning faculties, which is little short of madness, and which yet is one of the constant and practical sophisms of human life! It is as if one should say—I am in no danger from a tremendous machine unless I touch such a spring and therefore I will approach it, I will play with the danger, I will laugh at it, and at last in pure sport and

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wantonness of heart, from my sense of previous security, I *will* touch it—and *there's an end*. While the thing remains in contemplation, we may be said to stand safe and smiling on the brink : as soon as we proceed to action we are drawn into the vortex of passion and hurried to our destruction. A person taken up with some one purpose or passion is intent only upon that : he drives out the thought of every thing but its gratification : in the pursuit of that he is blind to consequences : his first object being attained, they all at once, and as if by magic, rush upon his mind. The engine recoils, he is caught in his own snare. A servant girl, for some pique, or for an angry word, determines to poison her mistress. She knows before hand (just as well as she does afterwards) that it is at least a hundred chances to one she will be hanged if she succeeds, yet this has no more effect upon her than if she had never heard of any such matter. The only idea that occupies her mind and hardens it against every other, is that of the affront she has received, and the desire of revenge ; she broods over it ; she meditates the mode, she is haunted with her scheme night and day ; it works like poison ; it grows into a madness, and she can have no peace till it is accomplished and *off her mind* ; but the moment this is the case, and her passion is assuaged, fear takes place of hatred, the slightest suspicion alarms her with the certainty of her fate from which she before wilfully averted her thoughts ; she runs wildly from the officers before they know any thing of the matter ; the gallows stares her in the face, and if none else accuses her, so full is she of her danger and her guilt, that she probably betrays herself. She at first would see no consequences to result from her crime but the getting rid of a present uneasiness ; she now sees the very worst. The whole seems to depend on the turn given to the imagination, on our immediate disposition to attend to this or that view of the subject, the evil or the good. As long as our intention is unknown to the world, before it breaks out into action, it seems to be deposited in our own bosoms, to be a mere feverish dream, and to be left with all its consequences under our imaginary controul : but no sooner is it realised and known to others, than it appears to have escaped from our reach, we fancy the whole world are up in arms against us, and vengeance is ready to pursue and overtake us. So in the pursuit of pleasure, we see only that side of the question which we approve : the disagreeable consequences (which may take place) make no part of our intention or concern, or of the wayward exercise of our will : if they should happen we cannot help it ; they form an ugly and unwished-for contrast to our favourite speculation : we turn our thoughts another way, repeating the adage *quod sic mihi ostendis incredulus odi*. It is a good remark in 'Vivian Grey,' that a

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bankrupt walks the streets the day before his name is in the Gazette with the same erect and confident brow as ever, and only feels the mortification of his situation after it becomes known to others. Such is the force of sympathy, and its power to take off the edge of internal conviction! As long as we can impose upon the world, we can impose upon ourselves, and trust to the flattering appearances, though we know them to be false. We put off the evil day as long as we can, make a jest of it as the certainty becomes more painful, and refuse to acknowledge the secret to ourselves till it can no longer be kept from all the world. In short, we believe just as little or as much as we please of those things in which our will can be supposed to interfere; and it is only by setting aside our own interests and inclinations on more general questions that we stand any chance of arriving at a fair and rational judgment. Those who have the largest hearts have the soundest understandings; and he is the truest philosopher who can forget himself. This is the reason why philosophers are often said to be mad, for thinking only of the abstract truth and of none of its worldly adjuncts,—it seems like an absence of mind, or as if the devil had got into them! If belief were not in some degree voluntary, or were grounded entirely on strict evidence and absolute proof, every one would be a martyr to his opinions, and we should have no power of evading or glossing over those matter-of-fact conclusions for which positive vouchers could be produced, however painful these conclusions might be to our own feelings, or offensive to the prejudices of others.

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THE spirit of philosophy consists in having the power to think, and patience to wait for the result. I do not mean to recommend an entire suspension of opinion as a matter of belief or feeling (that would be nearly impossible, and might be dangerous), what I mean, is, that one is to wait for the *proofs* till they come, however slowly or painfully; and not take up out of indolence, prejudice, or vanity with any thing short of a clear and satisfactory account, as a rational and philosophical solution. We may indulge our fancy or prejudices to a certain extent, so long as we do not mistake *prejudices* for *reasoning*. We must keep the understanding free; the judgment must be unbiassed. If we endeavour to shut out and suppress all natural feeling and inclination to one side of a question rather than another, this will be more likely to warp and precipitate our judgment, and make us impose false and premature arguments upon ourselves as the true, in order to get rid of

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so uneasy and artificial a state. But with a reasonable latitude allowed to our general notions and conjectures as to where the truth is to be found, we shall wait with more resolution and calmness for the dogmatical and formal issues of our inquiries. We may fancy, as mere common mortals, that a thing is so; but as philosophers, we are bound to show that it is so; and we should take care how we set up a pretence of being able to do this, either in our own minds, or as a law to others, before we are quite sure of our ground. A man may indulge in a lax and loose belief of any thing as a matter of ease and convenience to himself; but when he comes forward to assign the *why* and *how*, he becomes a dictator to others, and is inexcusable if he does not scrupulously discard all sinister influences of habit, authority, interest, and let reason alone usurp the empire of his breast. People in general suppose they have a right to have an opinion on all subjects, and that they are bound, and are able to prove satisfactorily, that they are in the right; because they have never thought about the question at all, it appears to them self-evident. It is no wonder, therefore, that with such universal and cheap pretensions to infallibility, they are impatient of having any doubt or objection thrown in their way, or of the smallest trouble or serious expence of mental labour in removing it. They very easily satisfy their own minds with some form of words, and are equally ready to convince others by menaces or blows, who do not come into their *common-place* conclusions, and blindly go all lengths with them. Many persons are willing to suspend their decision, and nearly indifferent what side they shall take; but no one having adopted an opinion is willing to allow he has done so without good reason, and is angry with any one who does not assent to his all-sufficiency in this respect. We find indeed that the most blind and bigoted belief is the most dogmatical; and that those ages and nations which are the most ignorant, are the most intolerant of a shadow of difference from their grossest creeds (for having no evidence to adduce in their favour, they cannot afford to have them called in question), and are the most bent on writing the proofs of their faith in the blood of their enemies. Heresy is, then, chiefly a statutable crime; and antipathies of opinion amount to antipathies of kind. A philosopher should take warning, and avoid this vulgar error. He should have firmness and candour to say, 'I think a thing is so, but I do not know why; I will not rest till I have found out the cause (if possible); but till I have, I will not deceive you, or amuse myself with a foolish and idle theory.' To encourage this tone of feeling, and to show that there is nothing degrading to the most acute, in waiting for an answer to the question, 'What is truth?' it may suffice to observe, that instead of that encyclopedia of wit and wisdom, which every sciolist would hang about his neck, and universal

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upstart pretension to be thoroughly informed *de omni scibile et quibusdam aliis*, it is as much as any one can hope to do, to discover a single truth in the course of a long and studious life; and often instead of taking for his motto, 'I will lead you into all knowledge,' he should be contented to say, 'I will show you a mystery.' The more we are convinced of the value of the prize, the less we shall be tempted to lay rash and violent hands on it; and the more apt to console ourselves for the slowness of our progress and our frequent failures, by the hope of ultimate success.

When we place our pride in the difficulty and nobleness of the pursuit rather than our own proficiency in it, we may, without a blush, confess that we know little or nothing; but 'if reasons were as plenty as blackberries,' we ought, then, to be able to 'give every man a reason upon compulsion.' I conceive that the mind, in the search after knowledge, very much resembles the truffle-hunter: the dog finds out, and is led to the spot where the object of his pursuit lies by the smell, but it is by his teeth and claws that he is able to remove the rubbish that hides it. So there is a certain air of truth which hovers over particular conclusions, and directs our attention towards them, but it is only the acuteness and strength of the reasoning faculty that digs down to the roots of things. In this way common sense or a certain tact may be said to be the foundation of truest philosophy; for there is always a certain number of facts with a general impression from them treasured up in the memory, which it is the business of the understanding to examine, and not to cavil at or contradict. This is one of the general errors of philosophy and sources of sophistry, that persons of more pretension than sincerity try to take an advantage of you, by denying the facts which are notorious to common observation, or for which an appeal may be had to their own consciousness, solely on the plea that you cannot explain them; whereas if the real phenomena are so (which is the first question), it is their business to account for them as much as yours, and not to make your deficiency in logic a ground of triumph equally over you and truth. Here, indeed, there is a kind of dilemma; for unless you are impressed with a belief of a certain thing, how are you to submit to the drudgery of finding out a reason for it? And on the other hand, if we take a thing for granted before we know, and are able to prove it to a demonstration, are we not in danger of giving a wrong bias to the mind, and bestowing vast pains and exhausting all our ingenuity to prop up a prejudice, instead of establishing a truth? The only preventive to this, is a strong love of truth, and openness to conviction; for, inquiring into the grounds and principles of certain facts, the facts themselves are brought again and again under review; and if they appear to be ill-supported or overpowered by a



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number of contrary facts, it is, then, high time to retreat from an untenable position, before it crumbles under our feet. The worst is, where interest and authority interfere to patch up a ricketty conclusion, and the mind is made the advocate and slave of established creeds and systems. Perhaps nine-tenths of the exertions of the human intellect have been directed (if we may judge from the contents of learned libraries) to prove the truth of doctrines, of which each individual neither believed nor understood a tittle, except from hearsay, and on the authority of others. Even vanity and the affectation of novelty, owes its force as an engine of sophistry and paradox, to the detection of the weakness and fallacy of so many prevailing and inveterate prejudices. Hence as one party are inclined to believe that every thing is entitled to their assent that is old, there are others, who, in the spirit of contradiction, and in their contempt for antiquated absurdity, are fully satisfied that every thing that is new-fangled, and of recent date, must be true. Where neither of these biases exists, and where the mind judges for itself, and from an undistorted, though vague induction of particulars, there is little apprehension that the inquirer should persist in an error of presumption, after there is sufficient evidence to the contrary; and as long as he does not see ground to change his original impression, he may persist in endeavouring to find out the positive proof, without fear of losing his labour. There is no reason to despair because the required solution does not come in a day; it is well if it comes 'with healing on its wings' at the end of years. It is not too long to stay, nor too much to expect, if we have but the right clue to it. This is every thing. If we keep the object we have in view always in mind, and are on the alert to make use of every observation or suggestion of our own thoughts that can illustrate it, then we may (not presumptuously, but with calm and confident breast) promise ourselves a successful result. But the better-grounded our hopes are, the more deep and unwearied our aspirations, the less we shall be disposed to anticipate the lucky minute—with the greater fortitude, and mixture of pride and humility, shall we gird ourselves up to our allotted task—and the more firmly shall we reject every specious appearance and idle shadow that would impose itself on us, for the very substance of truth. The love of truth, like charity, when it is sincere, 'hopeth all things, trieth all things, endureth all things.' There should be no desire for immediate applause, no inclination to gloss over shallow sophistry with the colours of style; a passion for truth, an interest in it that nothing can bribe or divert, a power of brooding over and deriving a supreme consolation from it, must be the basis of all true philosophy. There must be no flirting with mere popularity, no willingness to dazzle others and blind ourselves by a

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*leurre de dupe*, no eagerness to pluck the fruit of knowledge while yet green and unripe, no soothing flattery of friends, no angry collision with antagonists; but we must be contented to commune with ourselves and our own hearts, and nourish the appetite and the faith, in truth, in silence, and in lone obscurity, till a light breaks in upon us like a light from heaven; and the shape we have so long wooed, stands suddenly revealed in all its brightness to our longing sight. There is no art or method of invention to 'constrain' the truth, or force it to appear by certain cabalistic words or formal arrangements; it comes when least expected, like a thief in the night; it is given to our vows and prayers, to our thoughts ever intent on the unperverted impressions of things, and their workings in the mind, so as to bring out the causes by the continual weighing and scanning of numberless effects—not to a trick, or a *fiat* of the will, or a pragmatical conceit of ourselves. All great truths (with the previous disposition of mind we have described) are owing, not to system, but to accident; the condition of all discovery is to be involuntary (for what follows mechanically is not in the nature of a discovery). This is the fault of Lord Bacon's *Novum Organon*, who, after exploding the subtle distinctions and logomachies of the schoolmen, and referring every thing to experiment, sets up a scheme of invention of his own, and seems to think that ingenuity can lay a trap for truth, and hedge it in with an alternate series of affirmations and negations. This might be feasible, if the facts were (as he supposes) all known and limited in number; but the phenomena are infinite, obscure, and intricately inwoven together, so that it is only by being always alive to their tacit and varying influences, that we can hope to seize on the power that guides and binds them together, by seeing it manifested in some strong aspect or more remarkable instance of the kind. Suppose, for example, there is a contradiction involved in the notion of personal identity; so long as I confine my idea of the subject to the present state, this contradiction may not be so glaringly brought out, as that I should discover it; but let me transfer the notion to a future state of existence where this identity has been interrupted, and I have to begin *de novo*; and the incompatibility all at once becomes obvious—it stares me in the face; but I could not foresee that I should make such a discovery from this new comparison (or *invent* the example for that purpose), till I had actually and unexpectedly made it. But by turning over a subject long and late, these prizes in the wheel turn up oftener; and our incessant vigilance and search, do not go unrewarded. The finding out a *reason* is like finding out a *word*; it does not come at the moment we want it, but of its own accord afterwards, from the effort we have previously made, and our having set our minds upon it, which puts the desired train of association

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in motion. We know when we have got the right *word* ; if we take up with a wrong one, it is wilfully, and because we prefer sloth to sterling pains, the evasion of a difficulty to a triumph over it ; and so it may be said with respect to the search after truth. The temper and spirit of a true and improved method of philosophising, have been agreeably described by a philosophical poet of the present day, and I shall relieve the dryness of this description by quoting the lines :—

‘ The eye—it cannot choose but see,  
We cannot bid the ear be still ;  
Our bodies feel where'er they be,  
Against or with our will,  
Nor less I dream that there are powers,  
Which of themselves our minds impress :  
That we can feed this mind of ours,  
In a wise passiveness.  
Think you, mid all this mighty sum  
Of things for ever speaking,  
That nothing of itself will come,  
But we must still be seeking ?  
One impulse from a vernal wood  
May teach you more of man—  
Of moral evil and of good,  
Than all the sages can.  
Sweet is the lore which Nature brings :  
Our meddling intellect  
Misshapes the beauteous forms of things,  
—We murder to dissect.  
Enough of science and of art !  
Close up these barren leaves ;  
Come forth, and bring with you a heart  
That watches and receives.’<sup>1</sup>

True philosophy is softened by feeling, and owes allegiance to nature. Passion, it is true, may run away with reason ; but when the question is the nature and government of the passions, how understand without entering into them ? The blind might as well discourse of colours ! This is the flagrant error, the crying sin of a set of philosophers in our time, who, referring all things to utility, and a hard calculation of consequences, make clownish war upon all the pleasures and amenities of life, and leave not a single item in their account of good for the sum total to be composed of. They would reduce men to mere machines of iron or of wood ; and in their reasoning on the nature of society,

<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*.

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suppose that this transformation is not only eligible, but has already taken place. Like the 'O Lord, Sir!' in Shakespeare, their favourite phrase, 'the calculation of consequences,' answers all questions, and solves all difficulties. Courage is with them 'a calculation of consequences'—cowardice is so too; so that, by their account, courage is cowardice. Madmen, they say, reason. But at this rate, the world might be a greater Bedlam than it is, and yet they would persuade you that the patients are strict logicians. It is easy to repeat a set of cant phrases by rote, and call it philosophy, while the science of man is not advanced a single jot, but is rather obfuscated and obscured by an arrangement of 'tall, opaque words,' that pretend to explain every thing, and in reality mean nothing. The schoolmen were famous for these verbal fallacies; the moderns (without sufficient reason), affect to be free from them, and to appeal in all cases to experiment and ocular proof. They lay their hands upon some fact or object of sense, and think they have discovered a truth. Thus a bump on the head is an organ or faculty of the soul, and the brain is the mind itself. We can indeed feel the bump on the head or dissect the brain, but we know no more of the mind than we did before. Modern metaphysics is (as it has been defined by some of its self-satisfied professors), '*the art of naming*'; that is, it is calling one thing by the name of another, and arises from a want of the true spirit of philosophy, or from an impatience of inquiring into the real causes of things, and a determination to substitute a positive and tangible idea for an obscure and remote one, whether right or wrong. The exchange from *names* to *things* as symbols and exponents of general truths, is not always, therefore, an improvement. The nose on a man's face is a fact, a positive image; but am I, therefore, at liberty to assert (as a cover for my own ignorance, or a bribe to the indolence and credulity of others), that wit or memory is nothing but the nose on a man's face? This would be a strange perversion of the experimental philosophy; and yet it is one that is often made with great parade and formality. Another rule in philosophising is not merely to persevere with the strictest watchfulness and self-denial till we arrive at the goal, but to know where to stop. A man, by great labour and sagacity, finds out one truth; but from the importunate craving of the mind to know all, he would fain persuade himself that this one truth includes all others. Such has been the error of almost all systems and system-makers, who lose the advantage of the conquests they have achieved by pushing them too far, and aiming at universal empire—

'Vaulting ambition that o'erleaps itself,  
And falls on t'other side!'

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Thus the doctrine of the *association of ideas* was a great discovery in intellectual science, and an admirable clue to the development of an infinite variety of phenomena; but when it is made to explain every thing, and set up as the sole and primary principle of thought and action (which is impossible by the very terms), it becomes merely a confusion of ideas, and a handle for quackery and paradox.

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THE doctrine of selfishness and of the whole system of morals as depending on it, is founded on the metaphysical and practical notion of self or of personal identity. A man, it is assumed, is always the same with himself, and has necessarily the same interest in whatever happens to him today or tomorrow, just as for the same reason, *viz.*, that he is not and cannot become another, he has no possible interest in what happens to another, except as it is in some indirect way connected with his own. I do not deny the doctrine of self or of personal identity, for this as a vague, general proposition is a dictate of common sense; but I explain as a metaphysician in what this idea properly consists, and thus prove that it has nothing to do with selfishness or morals in any sense.

I divide self into three parts, the past, the present, and the future. Now in the two first of these, *viz.*, my past and present self, I am interested and of course identified in a peculiar, exclusive or individual manner by means of my two faculties, sensation or consciousness, and memory, so that in regard to my past or present being I am a strictly insulated or unsocial being, but neither the past nor the present are or can ever become subjects of voluntary action, that is, of self love, morally speaking; and with respect to the third division, *viz.*, my future self, which is alone the subject of action or selfish interest, I have no peculiar, exclusive faculty giving me an immediate, absolute, paramount interest in or sympathy with my future sensations, any more than with those of others, imagination being the only possible medium by which I hold communication equally with the one or the other. Thus I separate self into three distinct parts, with the two former of which individual and exclusive feelings are naturally and inseparably connected, but which, not possibly admitting of action, cannot lay the foundation of selfishness, and the last of which, the only proper subject of action or volition, cannot lead to this distinction more than the first, for here, where action or self-interest begins, the peculiar and inevitable sympathy is wanting which is necessary to constitute selfishness. We have therefore in the one case selfish feelings without the

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possibility of their being acted upon, and where we have this possibility, we have not the selfish or exclusive feelings, impelling our actions to one sole and undistracted end. What I here separate, I defy any man or the whole world united to join together again by an appeal to reason or facts.

To go a little more into detail.—I. First, I have an interest in my present self by means of *sensation*, which I cannot have in the feelings of any other individual whatever, because my senses do not extend beyond my personal identity to that of any other human being. Suppose, for example, a red-hot coal falls upon my hand; this occasions in me at the instant a lively and almost intolerable pain, which I certainly neither do nor can under any circumstances receive from the same burning substance falling on the hand of another. There is no organ of communication between my brain and another's nerves, by which what he may actually suffer is impressed on my mind or causes the same agony in me either as to kind or degree, as what is thus inflicted corporeally on my proper self. The latter feeling is *sui generis*, is exclusive, absolute, unavoidable, incommunicable, and draws a positive line of demarcation (so far) between me and that other; for what he feels (as a sensation) is nothing to me, can have no mechanical efficacy whatever, and is to all intents and purposes as if it had never existed, except as I may make it a subject of reflection and mental sympathy.

' Oh ! who can hold a fire in his hand  
By thinking on the frosty Caucasus ?  
Or wallow naked in December's snow  
By thinking on fantastic summer's heat ? '

The line between imagination and sensation is here correctly drawn, but the thinking of our own imaginary sensations no more avails (as is here shewn) against the pressure of the actual ones than the thinking of those of others.

II. Again, I have an interest in and continued identity with my past self by means of *memory*, which I have not nor can possibly have in or with that of any other being whatever, because this faculty is strictly confined to my own past sensations, and does not relate to those of anyone else : or the channel which this faculty opens between the past and the present is confined to my own past impressions and conscious traces which remain of them in my mind, and does not apply collaterally to the supposable impressions of any other living being. Thus I recollect by a peculiar, internal, and exclusive act of the mind the pain which I received from a coal of fire falling on my hand or any other cause, though I can form no idea of that pain as arising from the same accident to another, though I may have seen it with my eyes, except as

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a matter of conjecture and imagination, and from knowing what I myself have felt in the same circumstances, and applying this knowledge to the situation of another. But I have only the memory of what befell myself, as the scar alone remains upon my hand. I may have seen certain signs indicating pain or heard certain sounds expressive of it, but the internal impression itself is hid and inscrutable till I conjure up a likeness of it in my imagination; there is nothing traditional or mechanical in it. As far then as relates to the present or the past, I have a perfect or particular sympathy with my own interest which I by no means can be pretended to have with that of others; I feel the one and remember the other in a way peculiar to myself, and in which no one else can enter into my sensations, nor I into theirs: but neither the past nor present are properly subjects of volition or action; both are irrevocably fixed beyond the power of the will or any exertions of mine to alter, to make or unmake them, and therefore all that exclusive and mechanical interest which I may and must feel in them is, for the purposes of action, self-love, or voluntary and rational pursuit, thrown away, or absolutely and demonstrably indifferent, null, and void. All action, all volition, all self-love or benevolence, in a word, all moral conduct, must relate to the future (for it is over this alone that the will or action has any power); and thus in order to appreciate the character of man as a moral agent, either selfish or benevolent, we must see how he stands to this last, or what peculiar faculty there is by which his own future sensations are communicated to his mind and identified with his feelings beforehand so as to give him a peculiar and exclusive sympathy with, and desire to attach himself to, these alone in preference to all others.

III. Thirdly, then, as to my future being or feelings, which can alone be subjects of active pursuit or rational self-interest, I have no peculiar or exclusive faculty whatever, by which I sympathise with these as I do with my present being by means of sensation or with my past being by the help of memory, and which might consequently be the ostensible and necessary plea for setting up an inseparable barrier between the motives urging me to the pursuit of my own welfare or that of others, and making me out a naturally and indisputably selfish being, *i.e.*, agent. My senses do not take part in the question, that's certain: they do not warn me of pleasure or pain to come, and instinctively and irresistibly allure me to the one or repel me from the other, any more than these same senses extend beyond my own actual feelings to the actual feelings of others: neither does memory take cognisance of my future sensations, as it does of my past ones; to suppose it is to transpose the meaning of words and the order of nature. What faculty then remains to be the medium and expositor of my future being and

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the foundation of my strong personal interest in it? None exists or can be thought of but the imagination or reason, &c., and this gives me no particular, definite, or incommunicable fellow-feeling with my own future impressions, and opens a passage to these or excites my sympathy and interest in them in the same or a similar manner to that in which it also makes me conceive, understand and feel an interest in those of others, and an active disposition to love and serve them. In their essential and indestructible and only possible foundation, then, 'self love and social are the same.'—In order to establish the doctrine of exclusive and absolute selfishness, it is by the consent of all philosophers necessary to establish or conceive the doctrine of absolute personal identity, and in like manner to establish this last principle it is necessary to suppose a continuity of consciousness [in man] so that there is an immediate and inevitable communication between whatever he feels at any period of his abstract existence, as much as if it were concentrated and embodied altogether in one intimate and indissoluble act of consciousness. Now this principle, as I have shewn, acts retrospectively, or over one half of our existence, which accounts for the general inference to the whole; but I deny that the same principle acts prospectively at all, and therefore the general inference, and all connected with it in relation to future personal identity and sympathy with our abstract welfare, as a self-evident proposition falls to the ground of course. I have no fore-consciousness, no presentiment of the future in relation to myself more than others; or, except as a part of the ordinary understood course of nature, to whose laws I, with others, am subject and form a part of it, consequently no peculiar identity with or interest in it, in a strictly philosophical sense. If I am knocked down by a horse or cart in the street, the blow stuns me, I cannot help feeling as well as being overpowered by it; also, afterwards I retain a lively recollection and sense of terror in recalling it, but it is then too late to help it, and after the thing has happened, nothing more is to be said or done one way or the other. Now then, as it is only before a thing has happened that any thing can be done to prevent it, if as in this case an evil, the question is whether at this period I have any peculiar sense of it as happening to myself rather than another, and consequent and proportionable dread of it and resolution to avoid it? I say No, and common sense will on the smallest consideration give the same answer. If I am walking along the street and a house is going to fall on my head, have I any sense of apprehension of this five minutes before, or any mechanical sympathy with the blow as I have after it has happened, warning me of my danger and deterring me from it? It is absurd to suppose it for a moment, for in that case I should not go forward, and the event whose positive existence is supposed to be the



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real cause and object of a sensation in me would be turned into a nonentity and leave an effect without a cause. Self-love to be an instinctive or abstract principle, must possess fore-knowledge absolute, the spirit of prophecy or witchcraft—but it is not true, physically or metaphysically, that

‘Coming events cast their shadows before’

But without this species of second-sight into my own particular case (the converse of memory), without this immediate pressure of my own future lot upon my present feelings prompting me to avoid or aid it, without a union and meeting of future contingencies and present impulses in the same abstract sense of personal identity (a thing by this supposition impossible), the doctrine of a practical and preponderating self-love is a chimera and contradiction in terms. If I see a house going to fall and am myself going that way, I put the circumstances together and conclude that if I persist, the house will fall on my head and either crush me or give me a severe pain, from what I have known of similar concussions and contusions; and as the *idea* of this event and the pain following it is disagreeable to me, it produces a revulsion of my will, and I do all I can to prevent the actual impression from being realised. But in all this, the process is essentially and completely the same as when I see another advancing to the same danger, and about to undergo the same pain, the *idea* of which being the same in itself, and there being nothing then but such an idea, must in either case form an adequate and natural ground of interest and action, and lead to the same desire and effort to avert the consequence to either one or the other. This conclusion holds good unless it can be shewn (the *onus* lies with the self-love theorists) that there is [any] one faculty besides imagination interesting me in my future fate, and which takes no note of that of others; or that my present active self sends forward a kind of proxy of itself before it, to which the future evil actually happening, the pain and blow that it encounters acts upon my present motives and feelings impelling me thus to use every exertion and contrivance to prevent—what? That which is at the same time in this material, literal, and self-evident system of philosophy acting upon me physically as a future reality by deputy, and which is by this very means to induce me to take measures to prevent its ever becoming a reality at all, or anything more than an idle phantom of the imagination. This is beyond the credulity even of prejudice, conceit or passion. The imagination can feign this probability, can conjure up possible hopes and fears, agitating the mind, and saying if we do not act so, such and such things will happen, which may therefore constantly be prevented from happening; but let those who deny the validity of imaginary motives

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and interests to produce any practical effect at all, explain how either that which has actually come to pass can produce any rational efforts to influence its existence, or how that which will never come to pass can, by a species of representation of what has no existence but a problematical one in the brain, produce a mechanical and forcible volition to prevent its own existence, and consequently to take from it the power of being directly or indirectly the cause of anything *in rerum natura*.

My ignorance of the future proves the impossibility of my identity with it. I may be dead before this time to-morrow : do I know anything of it or feel any alarm on that account or instinctively take any pains to prevent it, unless from previous causes my reason and imagination foresee the probability of such an event ? But I assuredly have no such feeling, in virtue of my personal identity with myself, or by means of a continued consciousness of my own being and interests, incorporating them into one solid and indissoluble essence, which consciousness only acts retrospectively. My future self does not stalk before me to receive the blows of fate and transmit them back to me as my past self lingers behind me, carrying the pack of all my weal and woe. What is before us in time is not like what is before us in space ; or if the real event could give us warning of itself and so by exciting a real interest or an interest reflected from the reality furnish a substantial ground of action respecting it, then this would lead as already said to the contradiction of the same thing happening and not happening, its future reality being the cause of a motive to prevent it, and this motive, founded on its existence, preventing it from existing. Such are some of the absurdities involved in the doctrine of absolute self-interest and abstract identity, which would take a Jonathan Edwards or a Berkeley to point them out fully.

It follows from this chain of reasoning that an *idea* is virtually and *per se* the sole possible ground of volition and action. If we suppose the interest producing voluntary action to hinge upon the reality, then this interest partakes of the certainty or impossibility of the reality, and in either way supersedes all reasonable action. This can only proceed upon the supposition of the idea of something which we conceive of as possible under certain circumstances, or with certain 'appliances and means to boot,' and which, either by administering or withholding these means, may be either prevented or brought about. All voluntary action relates to the future. It is absurd to will that which is or has been to be or not to be, since no efforts of the will can have any influence in altering one or the other. The object of all passion and of all pursuit being to produce or to prevent something which we desire or dread, therefore the motive leading to voluntary action can never be the thing itself, which is the object of action, but

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must always be the idea of that thing conceived of before it exists, for the thing itself is by the supposition a nonentity and cannot be the real cause of anything, of any interest or action. The object is never the motive of voluntary action. This must be merely an idea of that thing, and if this is pronounced insufficient to produce such practical and important consequences, then there can be neither self-love nor benevolence, for there is no other ground of action possible either in our case or in the case of others.—As it is allowed on all hands that an idea of good or evil (not the good or evil itself) is in our own case a sufficient and irresistible motive to action, and by this that has been said that this idea is not strengthened in our own case by any peculiar, mechanical impulse confining and enforcing it in that particular direction, it therefore follows that this idea when fully and distinctly conceived must be in itself a sufficient and powerful motive of action and volition. It has been argued before now that if the sensation of any thing be good and desirable, the idea of that thing (being of like nature) must by parity of reasoning be also good and desirable; but it has never been shewn till now that I am aware of that it was impossible that it should be otherwise, and that it is the *idea* of a thing only that is or can be the object of love or desire in the voluntary sense of these terms. The sight of a face, for instance, is fair and pleasing: why then, it is asked by Bishop Butler and others, should not the idea of that face be also pleasing? Good or evil in itself is an object of desire or aversion: how then, without changing the nature of these objects, should we separate the emotions of desire or aversion from the idea of them respectively, whether relating to ourselves or others? This is candid and plausible enough: what I have shewn above [word omitted] that this must be the case; for that the reality or positive sensation never is or can be the motive of action, and that if the idea is not sufficient for this purpose, there can be neither volition nor action, since no other is possible in the nature of things and by the very enunciation of the terms. There are various ways in which the force of this logical or chronological dilemma may be attempted to be eluded, and in answering them I may be able to open up the view of the original proposition more clearly than I otherwise could. First, it may be denied that the future alone is the object of action, for that if I thrust my hand by accident into the flame of a candle, I suddenly draw it back to avoid the present pain, and that it is the sensation in this case that is the immediate motive of action. Secondly, it may be said that it is not the idea of the good that is the determining motive of my choice, but the idea or condition annexed *that it is mine* that attaches me to it, and sets aside my previous and natural indifference. Thirdly, that though in my own case I do not feel the future good or evil, yet it is I who am to

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feel it, and that this makes the essential and indeed all the difference between the pursuit of my own future welfare and that of others, so that I have an intimate and unavoidable interest in the one, and none at all in the other. Fourthly, it will be insisted on that habit and association give me a strong attachment to and knowledge of my own interests and pursuits, and proportionably wean and alienate me from taking the same share in the passions, follies, schemes, &c., of others, which are to me (seriously speaking) *vox et praeterea nihil*. Of these in their order, and I can only say of them, *Valeant quantum valent* !

(1) The first is an extreme case, but it will be found upon examination to confirm the rule. I do not deny that the actual sense of pain strengthens the imaginary dread and desire to put an end to it ; but it could not do this if the latter were naturally powerless and incapable of being stimulated into efficient action. The distinction I lay down is this. Volition or action implies the use of means to ends, a series (longer or shorter) of causes and effects : the means precede the ends, the volition to employ them precedes the means, therefore the motive always precedes the end aimed at, which is the *rationale* of its existence, or in other words, voluntary action always and universally points to the future, and could have no existence but with reference to it. A writhing or convulsion may be caused physically by the mere pain, but not a deliberate effort (however sudden) to get rid of it. This implies the fear of its continuance, the hope of its cessation, the idea of myself as continuing to be exposed to the same infliction, the means to avoid this, as probably the encountering a greater degree of immediate pain to be relieved from it the moment after ; all which suppose an intellectual being and a capacity to take an interest in the rapid combinations and anticipations it makes (so rapid and vivid as to be taken for the reality) ; for it is demonstrable and undeniable that a merely animal or sentient being could feel no conception or idea of any thing beyond the actual infliction of pain, and that a being incapable of feeling a [word illegible] and being actuated by ideal or prospective motives could neither feel a wish nor lift a finger to avoid the most acute and imminent tortures which could be so avoided. The actual pain enlivens, I grant, the apprehension of pain, as the sight of the object conveys the sense of danger, or the taste of liquor the drunkard's thirst. But so the sight of another in danger produces a sudden and involuntary terror, and the having felt certain pains ourselves makes us more sensible of them in others. *Non ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco*. It is a general rule that those who do not feel at all for others, feel but little for themselves.

(2) It is said it is not to good or happiness but to myself that I am attached ; or that I will my own good, not because it is good, but

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because it is mine. At this rate, I should also will my own evil, for that also is mine. There must be something in the contemplation of the different qualities of good or evil that calls forth such opposite affections; it cannot be their happening to me, for the circumstance is common to both, and these different and powerful affections must be excited by the idea of good and evil, for this reason, that it is impossible from their very nature as voluntary affections that any thing else should excite them. But if I cannot separate this idea of good or evil in relation to myself from certain affections and impulses, though that relation to myself is not the appropriate cause of their existence, then though they should be transferred to others, they will still contain in themselves the germ and native principles of all the same affections and moral sympathies and consequences.

(3) It is not I who feel my future pleasure or pain, but nevertheless it is I who am to feel it, and this makes an absolute distinction in the case between myself and another. It must then be from the idea that this will be the case, not from the fact which might influence me hereafter when too late or as the critic of my past conduct not the present conduct itself, which brings us back to the old question. It is true the connection with or attachment to my future self (*par excellence*) would impose such an exclusive obligation on my present self, supposing it to exist, but this is the very point at issue.

(4) But surely there is a difference between a real and a merely imaginary interest in anything? Certainly, in relation to the objects contemplated, as whether they are true or false. But the distinction says nothing for blind, exclusive self-love. The joys or woes of others are as real, and in that sense as little imaginary, as my own can possibly be; and the only object of the philosophy of disinterestedness is to conform our affections and views more to the truth of things in nature, and to have them less warped and narrowed to names, which are prejudices, or to our senses, which are no judges in our own case or that of others.

But, lastly, habit and familiarity make us better acquainted with our own feelings, accustom us more to consult our own inclinations, and consequently give us a stronger and more unequivocal attachment to ourselves. This is undoubtedly and unavoidably true, and the whole truth of the argument, but not the extent of the prejudice here contended: for habit is not nature, the difference here contended for and admitted is arbitrary and one of degree and not of kind, and the same difference takes place with regard to others for the same cause of habit and acquaintance, so that we are attached to friends, children, &c., in the like proportion and for the same reason as to ourselves, namely, according to our sympathy with and knowledge of their wants, and habit of serving and interesting

## OUTLINES OF MORALS

ourselves in their welfare, and it is on the same foundation that the superstructure of self-love is raised, and not on any metaphysical identity with ourselves and absolute and insurmountable separation both of being, sympathy and interest with all the rest of the world. If so, we could never under any circumstances feel more for one than another. Self would absorb not only all general and fantastic benevolence, but all family, private and what is called *natural affection*, in its iron grasp. These natural affections are not emanations of our love of self, but our love of self is nothing but the closest and strongest of them formed out of a general principle of love of good, strengthened and determined to a particular point (which some will therefore make an exclusive and original one), by circumstances, indulgence, prejudice, and habit.

I have thus endeavoured to shew what self is and what it is not ; and the limits which are consequently set to the doctrine of self-love. This ceases the moment it becomes practical, or any advantage can be drawn from it for ourselves or against others. I have a strong and intimate sympathy with my past and present self (or what may be termed a real interest), and as this self is continually moving forward and the resemblance holds good, the same idea of self and of a real interest is transferred to the future and stamped upon my personal motives, though the latter are wholly and absolutely *ideal*. That self which I, as it were, project before me into the future, that interest which I feel and take in it, is but a shadow of the past : it has nothing solid or self-evident in it. But from the mere resemblance of my past to my future self and the strong natural or habitual sympathy I have with it, the future imaginary self and self-interest is taken for an actual substance, and raised to an equality and transformed into an identity with my downright positive existence, as seamen mistake clouds for the horizon. My proceeding to reason, feel and act upon this projected shadowy conception as a present truth, instead of shewing a nullity of imagination, shews its strength, and establishes as fact and beyond contradiction that imaginary motives and interests, instead of being good for nothing, are just as good as any others, being in fact mistaken for them and acted upon as such all our lives. Nature in constructing our personal identity does just as men in constructing a mole into the sea : as far as they have gone or up to the present point it affords solid footing, and they can walk backwards and forwards in security and confidence on what is already built, but to suppose that because it is to be continued on the same plan and so much farther, they can proceed forward on the imaginary mole as on the real one, and walk over the pier-head on the strength of an hypothesis, would be the same absurdity as those fall into who fancy they have always the same interest in

## OUTLINES OF TASTE

themselves because they are themselves, and that the stress they lay in theory and practice on their own future interest is real and not imaginary, like that they take in that of any one else.

## OUTLINES OF TASTE

**TASTE** relates to that which, either in the objects of nature, or the imitation of them or the Fine Arts in general is calculated to give pleasure. Now, to know what is calculated to give pleasure, the way is to enquire what does give pleasure: so that taste is, after all, much more a matter of fact and less of theory than might be imagined. We may hence determine another point, *viz.*, whether there is any universal or exclusive standard of taste, since this is to inquire, in other words, whether there is any one thing that pleases all the world alike, or whether there is only one thing that pleases anybody, both which questions carry their own answers with them. Still it does not follow, because there is no dogmatic or bigoted standard of taste, like a formula of faith, which whoever does not believe without doubt he shall be damned everlastingly, that there is no standard of taste whatever, that is to say, that certain things are not more apt to please than others, that some do not please more generally, that there are not others that give most pleasure to those who have studied the subject, that one nation is most susceptible of a particular kind of beauty, and another of another, according to their characters, &c. It would be a difficult attempt to force all these into one general rule or system, and yet equally so to deny that they are absolutely capricious, and without any foundation or principle whatever. There are, doubtless, books for children that we discard as we grow up; yet, what are the majority of mankind, or even readers, but grown children? If put to the vote of all the milliners' girls in London, *Old Mortality*, or even *Heart of Midlothian*, would not carry the day (or, at least, not very triumphantly) over a common Minerva-press novel; and I will hazard another opinion, that no woman ever liked Burke. Mr. Pratt, on the contrary, said that he had to 'boast of many learned and beautiful suffrages.'<sup>1</sup> It is not, then, solely from the greatest number of voices, but from the opinion of the greatest number of well-informed minds, that we can establish, if not an absolute standard, at least a comparative scale, of taste. Certainly, it can hardly be doubted that the greater the number of persons of strong natural sensibility or love for any art, and who have paid the closest attention to it, who agree in their admiration of any work of art, the higher do its pretensions rise to classical taste and

<sup>1</sup> In answer to a criticism by Mr. Godwin on his poem called *Sympathy*.

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intrinsic beauty. In this way, as the opinion of a thousand good judges may outweigh that of nearly all the rest of the world, so there may be one individual among them whose opinion may outweigh that of the other nine hundred and ninety-nine; that is, one of a still stronger and more refined perception of beauty than all the rest, and to whose opinion that of the others and of the world at large would approximate and be conformed, as their taste or perception of what was pleasing became stronger and more confirmed by exercise and proper objects to call it forth. Thus, if we were still to insist on an universal standard of taste, it must be that, not which *does*, but which *would* please universally, supposing all men to have paid an equal attention to any subject and to have an equal relish for it, which can only be guessed at by the imperfect and yet more than casual agreement among those who have done so from choice and feeling. Taste is nothing but an enlarged capacity for receiving pleasure from works of imagination, &c. It is time, however, to apply this rule. There is, for instance, a much greater number of habitual readers and players in France, who are devoted admirers of Racine or Molière than there are in England of Shakspeare: does Shakspeare's fame rest, then, on a less broad and solid foundation than that of either of the others? I think not, supposing that the class of judges to whom Shakspeare's excellences appeal are a higher, more independent, and more original court of criticism, and that their suffrages are quite as unanimous (though not so numerous) in the one case as in the other. A simile or a sentiment is not the worse in common opinion for being somewhat superficial and hackneyed, but it is the worse in poetry. The perfection of *commonplace* is that which would unite the greatest number of suffrages, if there were not a tribunal above *commonplace*. For instance, in Shakspeare's description of flowers, primroses are mentioned—

‘ That come before the swallow dares, and take  
The winds of March with beauty : ’

Now, I do not know that this expression is translatable into French, or intelligible to the common reader of either nation, but raise the scale of fancy, passion, and observation of nature to a certain point, and I will be bold to say that there will be no scruple entertained whether this single metaphor does not contain more poetry of the kind than is to be found in all Racine. As no Frenchman could write it, so I believe no Frenchman could understand it. We cannot take this insensibility on their part as a mark of our superiority, for we have plenty of persons among ourselves in the same predicament, but not the wisest or most refined, and to these the appeal is



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fair from the many—‘and fit audience find, though few.’ So I think it requires a higher degree of taste to judge of Titian’s portraits than Raphael’s scripture pieces : not that I think more highly of the former than the latter, but the world and connoisseurs in general think there is no comparison (from the dignity of the subject), whereas I think it difficult to decide which are the finest. Here again we have a commonplace, a preconception, the moulds of the judgment preoccupied by certain assumptions of degrees and classes of excellence, instead of judging from the true and genuine impressions of things. Men of genius, or those who can produce excellence would be the best judges of it—poets of poetry, painters of painting, &c.—but that persons of original and strong powers of mind are too much disposed to refer everything to their own peculiar bias, and are comparatively indifferent to merely passive impressions. On the other hand, it is wholly wrong to oppose taste to genius, for genius in works of art is nothing but the power of producing what is beautiful (which, however, implies the intimate sense of it), though this is something very different from mere negative or formal beauties, which have as little to do with taste as genius.

I have, in a former essay, ascertained one principle of taste or excellence in the arts of imitation, where it was shown that objects of sense are not as it were simple and self-evident propositions, but admit of endless analysis and the most subtle investigation. We do not see nature with our eyes, but with our understandings and our hearts. To suppose that we see the whole of any object, merely by looking at it, is a vulgar error : we fancy that we do, because we are, of course, conscious of no more than we see in it, but this circle of our knowledge enlarges with further acquaintance and study, and we then perceive that what we perhaps barely distinguished in the gross, or regarded as a dull blank, is full of beauty, meaning, and curious details. He sees most of nature who understands its language best, or connects one thing with the greatest number of other things. Expression is the key to the human countenance, and unfolds a thousand imperceptible distinctions. How, then, should every one be a judge of pictures, when so few are of faces ? A merely ignorant spectator, walking through a gallery of pictures, no more distinguishes the finest than your dog would, if he was to accompany you. Do not even the most experienced dispute on the preference, and shall the most ignorant decide ? A vulgar connoisseur would even prefer a Denner to a Titian, because there is more of merely curious and specific detail. We may hence account for another circumstance, why things please in the imitation which do not in reality. If we saw the whole of anything, or if the object in nature were merely

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one thing, this could not be the case. But the fact is, that in the imitation, or in the scientific study of any object, we come to an analysis of the details or some other abstract view of the subject which we had overlooked in a cursory examination, and these may be beautiful or curious, though the object in the gross is disgusting, or connected with disagreeable or uninteresting associations. Thus, in a picture of *still life*, as a shell or a marble chimney-piece, the stains or the gradations of colour may be delicate, and subjects for a new and careful imitation, though the *tout ensemble* has not, like a living face, the highest beauty of intelligence and expression. Here lie and here return the true effects and triumphs of art. It is not in making the eye a microscope, but in making it the interpreter and organ of all that can touch the soul and the affections, that the perfection of fine art is shown. Taste, then, does not place in the first rank of merit what merely proves difficulty or gratifies curiosity, unless it is combined with excellence and sentiment, or the pleasures of imagination and the moral sense. In this case the pleasure is more than doubled, where not only the imitation but the thing imitated, is fine in itself. Hence the preference given to Italian over Dutch pictures.

In respect to the imitation of nature, I would further observe that I think Sir Joshua Reynolds was wrong in making the grandeur of the design depend on the omission of the details, or the want of finishing. This seems also to proceed on the supposition that there cannot be two views of nature, but that the details are opposed to and inconsistent with an attention to general effect. Now this is evidently false, since the two things are undoubtedly combined by nature. For instance, the grandeur of design or character in the arch of an eyebrow is not injured or destroyed in reality by the hair-lines of which it is composed. Nor is the general form or outline of the eyebrow altered in the imitation, whether you make it one rude mass or descend into the minutiae of the parts, which are arranged in such a manner as to produce the arched form and give the particular expression. So the general form of a nose, say an aquiline one, is not affected, whether I paint a wart which may happen to be on it or not, and so of the outline and proportions of the whole face. That is, general effect is consistent with individual details, and though these are not necessary to it, yet they often assist it, and always confirm the sense of verisimilitude. The most finished paintings, it is true, are not the grandest in effect; but neither is it true that the greatest daubs are the most sublime in character and composition. The best painters have combined an eye to the whole with careful finishing, and as there is a medium in all things, so the rule here seems to be not to go on *ad infinitum* with the details, but to stop when the time

## OUTLINES OF TASTE

and labour necessary seem, in the judgment of the artist, to exceed the benefit produced.

Beauty does not consist in a medium, but in gradation or harmony. It has been the fashion of late to pretend to refer everything to association of ideas (and it is difficult to answer this appeal, since association, by its nature, mixes up with everything), but as Hartley has himself observed, who carried this principle to the utmost extent, and might be supposed to understand its limits, association implies something to be associated, and if there is a pleasing association, there must be first something naturally pleasing from which the secondary satisfaction is reflected, or to which it is conjoined. The chirping of a sparrow is as much a rural and domestic sound as the notes of the robin or the thrush, but it does not serve as a point to link other interests to because it wants beauty in itself; and, on the other hand, the song of the nightingale draws more attention to itself as a piece of music, and conveys less sentiment than the simple note of the cuckoo, which, from its solitary singularity, acts as the warning voice of time. Those who deny that there is a natural and pleasing softness arising from harmony or gradation, might as well affirm that sudden and abrupt transitions do not make our impressions more distinct as that they do not make them more harsh and violent. Beauty consists in gradation of colours or symmetry of form (conformity): strength or sublimity arises from the sense of power, and is aided by contrast. The ludicrous is the incoherent, arising, not from a conflicting power, but from weakness or the inability of any habitual impulse to sustain itself. The *ideal* is not confined to creation, but takes place in imitation, where a thing is subjected to one view, as all the parts of a face to the same expression. Invention is only feigning according to nature, or with a certain proportion between causes and effects. Poetry is infusing the same spirit into a number of things, or bathing them all as it were, in the same overflowing sense of delight (making the language also soft and musical), as the same torch kindles a number of lamps. I think invention is chiefly confined to poetry and words or ideas, and has little place in painting or concrete imagery, where the want of truth, or of the actual object, soon spoils the effect and force of the representation. Indeed, I think all genius is, in a great measure, national and local, arising out of times and circumstances, and being sustained at its full height by these alone, and that originality is not a deviation from, but a recurrence to nature. Rules and models destroy genius and art; and the excess of the artificial in the end cures itself, for it in time becomes so uniform and vapid as to be altogether contemptible, and to seek *perforce* some other outlet or purchase for the mind to take hold of.

## BOSWELL REDIVIVUS

The metaphysical theory above premised will account not only for the difficulty of imitating nature, but for the excellence of various masters, and the diversity and popularity of different styles. If the truth of sense and nature were one, there could be but one mode of representing it, more or less correct. But nature contains an infinite variety of parts, with their relations and significations, and different artists take these, and altogether do not give the whole. Thus Titian coloured, Raphael designed, Rubens gave the florid hue and motions, Rembrandt *chiaro-scuro*, &c. ; but none of these reached perfection in their several departments, much less with reference to the whole circumference of art. It is ridiculous to suppose there is but one standard or one style. One artist looks at objects with as different an eye from another, as he does from the mathematician. It is erroneous to tie down individual genius to ideal models. Each person should do that, not which is best in itself, even supposing this could be known, but that which he can do best, which he will find out if left to himself. Spenser could not have written *Paradise Lost*, nor Milton the *Faërie Queene*. Those who aim at faultless regularity will only produce mediocrity, and no one ever approaches perfection except by stealth, and unknown to themselves. Did Correggio know what he had done when he had painted the 'St. Jerome'—or Rembrandt when he made the sketch of 'Jacob's Dream?' Oh, no! Those who are conscious of their powers never do anything.

### BOSWELL REDIVIVUS: A FRAGMENT

N—— then asked me if I had seen anything of H——? I said, yes; and that he had vexed me; for I had shown him some fine heads from the Cartoons, done about a hundred years ago (which appeared to me to prove that since that period those noble remains have fallen into a state of considerable decay), and when I went out of the room for a moment, I found the prints thrown carelessly on the table, and that he had got out a volume of Tasso, which he was spouting, as I supposed, to let me understand that I knew nothing of art, and that he knew a great deal about poetry.

I said I never heard him speak with enthusiasm of any painter or work of merit, nor show any love of art, except as a puffing-machine for him to get up into and blow a trumpet in his own praise. Instead of falling down and worshipping such names as Raphael and Michael Angelo, he is only considering how he may, by storm or stratagem, place himself beside them, on the loftiest seats of Parnassus, as ignorant country

## THE DAMNED AUTHOR'S ADDRESS

squires affect to sit with judges on the bench. He told me he had had a letter from Wilkie, dated Rome, with three marks of admiration, and that he had dated his answer 'Babylon the Great,' with four marks of admiration. Stuff! Why must he always 'out-Herod Herod'? Why must the place where he is always have one note of admiration more than any other? He gave as his reasons, indeed, our river, our bridges, the Cartoons, and the Elgin Marbles—the two last of which, however, are not our own. H—— should have been the boatswain of a man-of-war: he has no other ideas of glory than those which belong to a naval victory, or to vulgar noise and insolence; not at all as something in which the whole world may participate alike. I hate 'this stamp exclusive and professional.' He added that Wilkie gave a poor account of Rome, and seemed, on the whole, disappointed. He (H——) should not be disappointed when he went, for his expectations were but moderate. 'Ay, said N——, 'that is like the speech of a little, crooked, conceited painter of the name of Edwards, who went to Italy with Romney and Humphreys, and when they looked round the Vatican, he turned round to Romney and said, "Egad, George, we're bit."'

I said that when I heard stories of this kind, of even clever men who seemed to have no idea or to take no interest except in what they themselves could do, it almost inclined me to be of Peter Pindar's opinion, who pretended to prefer taste to genius: 'Give me,' said he, 'one man of taste, and I will find you twenty men of genius.' N—— replied, 'It is a pity you should be of that opinion, for all your acquaintances are great geniuses; and yet, I fancy, they have no admiration for anybody but themselves.'

## THE DAMNED AUTHOR'S ADDRESS TO HIS REVIEWERS

THE rock I'm told on which I split  
Is bad economy of wit—  
An affectation to be thought  
That which I am and yet am not,  
Deep, brilliant, new, and all the rest :  
Help, help, thou great economist  
Of what thou ne'er thyself possest,  
Of financiers the ruthless Moloch,  
Dry, plodding, husky, stiff Maculloch !  
Or to avoid the consequences  
I may incur from corporate dunces,

## TO HIS REVIEWERS

I'll write as Allen writes the livelong day ;  
Whate'er his Lordship says, I'll say—  
(To hint what ne'er was said before  
Is but to be set down a *bore*  
By all the learned Whigs and Dames  
Who fear you should out-write Sir James)—  
I'll swear that every strutting elf  
Is just what he conceives himself,  
Or draw his picture to the life  
As all the world would—and *his wife* !  
From Mackintosh I'll nature learn,  
With Sidney Smith false glitter spurn ;  
Lend me, oh ! Brougham, thy modesty,  
Thou, Thomas Moore, simplicity ;  
Mill, scorn of juggling politics ;  
Thy soul of candour, Chenevix ;  
And last, to make my measure full,  
Teach me, great J——y, to be dull !



## NOTES





## NOTES

### ON MODERN COMEDY

First reprinted by Waller and Glover. The second of two letters written by Hazlitt in criticism of an article in *The Morning Chronicle* of September 17 entitled 'The English Stage,' of which the dramatic critic of the newspaper, William Mudford, was no doubt the author. Hazlitt's first letter, of September 25, began 'Sir, The question proposed by your Correspondent, *Why there are so few good modern Comedies*,' and continued as in *The Round Table* (vol. iv. pp. 10-14 and notes). The writer of the article replied to Hazlitt's letter under the heading 'The Drama' on October 4, and the present letter is Hazlitt's reply to that reply. The sequel to the correspondence was Hazlitt's own appointment to the position of dramatic critic.

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1. 'The plainest understanding.' Mudford's phrase.  
'Dazzled [blasted] with excess of light.' Gray, *Progress of Poesy*, III. 2. 7.  
'Smiles delighted,' etc. Cowper, *The Task*, iv. 486.  
The writer of a former article. Hazlitt's, of September 25. See above.
2. 'For true no-meaning,' etc. Pope, *Moral Essays*, II. 114.
3. Like Christopher Sly. *The Taming of the Shrew*, Induction, Scene 2.  
'To laugh [jest], etc. *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 2. 879.  
. 8 from bottom. This passage, from 'We cannot expect to reconcile opposite things' to the words 'journey's end' at the top of the next page, Hazlitt interpolated in his 'Theatrical Examiner' and *Round Table* paper of the same title.  
See vol. iv. p. 12 and note; and cf. *The English Comic Writers* (vol. vi. p. 152).
4. Not one but all mankind's epitome. Unacknowledged from Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, l. 546.
5. Laborious foolery. Hazlitt elsewhere places this phrase within quotation marks.
6. The picture of the Flamborough Family. See vol. v. p. 119 and note.  
*Alithea and Miss Peggy*. See vol. vi. p. 76 and note.  
Subscribing to the same circulating library, etc. It will be noted that Hazlitt had this passage before him in writing another in *The English Comic Writers* (vol. vi. p. 153).
7. Voltaire . . . Cato. *Œuvres*, xxxv. 159. Cf. vol. xviii. p. 446.  
*The Heiress*. General Sir John Burgoyne's (1722-92) comedy, produced in 1786.  
*Basil*. Cf. vol. v. p. 147 and note.  
*Fancies [cowslips]* 'wan,' etc. *Lycidas*, 147.  
'They have not seen the Court,' etc. Cf. *As You Like It*, III. 2. 41-2.  
What does he mean by refinement? etc. This passage, to the bottom of the page, in conjunction with that noted above (p. 6), is used by Hazlitt in *The English Comic Writers* (vol. vi. pp. 152-3).

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7. 'The ring of mimic Statesmen,' etc. Pope, *Moral Essays*, III. 3. 309-10.  
Baron Grimm. See vol. iv. pp. 131-6 and notes, and 'Baron Grimm and the Edinburgh Reviewers,' below.
8. *The Upholsterer in The Tatler*. See Nos. 155, 160, and 178; and cf. vol. vi. p. 96, and vol. xviii. p. 305.
9. *Omne tulit punctum*. Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 343.
10. *The Tatler*, No. 42. The number is omitted in the newspaper.  
As to Molière, etc. This passage, to 'any thing but comedy' near the end of the paragraph on the next page, Hazlitt reproduces in *The English Comic Writers* (vol. vi. pp. 28-9) and again in his introductions to Oxberry's *Drama* (vol. ix. pp. 72-3).
11. 'Shewing the very body,' etc. *Hamlet*, III. 2. 26.
12. 'None yet,' etc. *Paradise Lost*, III. 444-6.

### [BARON GRIMM AND THE EDINBURGH REVIEWERS]

Under this title appeared in *The Morning Chronicle* of October 28, 1813, a letter, signed 'H.,' which Hazlitt made into *The Round Table* paper 'On the Literary Character' (vol. iv. pp. 131 *et seq.*). His omissions and principal variations from the original letter are here noted.

After quoting from *The Edinburgh Review* at greater length (vol. iv. p. 132), he proceeds in the newspaper as follows:

'These remarks, however shrewd and ingenious in themselves, are somewhat irrelevant to the literary and philosophical character of Mr. Grimm and his friends. There seems to have been an odd transposition of ideas in the writer's mind; for the whole of his reasoning relates to the manners of fashionable life, or the tendency of mixed and agreeable society in general, to produce levity and insensibility, and does not at all apply to the peculiar defects of the literary character, or account for that hard-heartedness, which Mr. Burke attributes, by way of emphasis, to the *thorough-bred metaphysician*.<sup>1</sup> The two characters are evidently distinct, and proceed from very different and even opposite causes, which ought not to have been confounded. It would have been a task worthy of the Edinburgh Reviewers to have pointed out the sources of each, and to have shewn how both appear to have united in the present instance with the natural levity of the French character to produce that "faultless monster which the world ne'er saw" before.<sup>2</sup> Much is undoubtedly to be given to accidental and local circumstances. Boswell's *Life of Johnson* presents a very different picture of men and manners from Grimm's *Memoirs*, though in the circle described by the former there were men who at least rivalled M. Grimm in literature, and in politeness and knowledge of mankind might vie with Baron d'Holbach. The profligacy of the French court, and the mummeries of the established religion might naturally produce an almost satiric license and impudence among the enlightened partisans of the new order of things, and lead them to regard all religion as a barefaced cheat, and every pretension to virtue as hypocrisy. The peculiar intelligible features of the philosophical and literary character are, however, stamped on every page of M. Grimm's correspondence; and as they do not seem to have been very well distinguished by the Reviewer, I shall venture to

<sup>1</sup> 'Nothing can be conceived more hard than the heart of a thoroughbred metaphysician.' *A Letter to a Noble Lord* (*Works*, Bohn, v. 141).

<sup>2</sup> John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham: *Essay on Poetry*.

## NOTES

throw out a few hints on the subject, in the hope that they may be taken up and embodied in an authentic form in some future supplementary volume.'

In the following paragraph, beginning 'The weaknesses and vices,' two modifications are made, both having the effect of softening the criticism of Jeffrey's article. The sentence at the foot of p. 132 reads in the newspaper, 'The defects of the literary character proceed, not certainly as they are described in the Review, from frivolity,' etc., and that beginning six lines down p. 133 is altered from, 'As far as the change of actual objects, the real variety and dissipation goes, that is, as far as the explanation of the Edinburgh Review goes, there is no difference,' etc.

The footnote at vol. iv. p. 135 is an addition to the newspaper text.

The letter in the newspaper continues beyond its conclusion in *The Round Table* as follows :

'There is another very striking distinction between the indifference and insensibility to moral good and evil, to be met with in the philosopher or the man of the world, which the Reviewer has not pointed out. In the one, it is the effect of "frivolity, dissipation, and familiarity with vice"; in the other, it is oftener the effect of disappointed hope and early enthusiasm. The aversion of the philosopher to moral speculations has almost always the same source as the exclamation of Brutus, "Oh Virtue! I embraced thee as a substance, and I find thou art a shadow!" There is hardly any one of the persons who figure in these memoirs who did not set out with some panacea for the salvation of mankind, with as much sanguine extravagance as ever knight-errants indulged to conquer giants and rescue distressed damsels. The wounds received in the conflict might close, but the scar would remain. Indeed, the practical knowledge of vice and misery makes a stronger impression on the mind, when it has once imbibed a habit of abstract reasoning. Evil thus becomes embodied in a general principle, and shews its happy form in all things. It is a fatal, inevitable necessity hanging over us. It follows us wherever we go—if we fly into the uttermost parts of the earth, it is there; whether we turn to the right or the left, we cannot escape from it.

'This, it is true, is the disease of philosophy; but it is one to which it is liable in minds of a certain cast, after the first ardour of expectation has been disabused by experience, and the finer feelings have received an irrecoverable shock from the jarring of the world.

'There seems a peculiar tenaciousness in the French character in this respect, an unfortunate aptitude to cling to every vice and catch at every folly, or else a want of freshness of feeling, of that elastic force about the heart which repels the approach of moral or intellectual depravity.

'What is said of the tone of the literary society of Paris is equally misunderstood. The Reviewers hardly mean to represent the exclusion of tediousness and pertinacious wrangling, as the general character of assemblies of wits and philosophers in all ages and nations. If so, their opinion differs from that of the Sage. The fact is, that the men of letters at this period, by mixing in the fashionable circles, took the tone of good company, as the people of fashion, by their familiarity with men of letters, received the tincture of philosophy. The two characters were blended together in real life, and are confounded in the Edinburgh Review.'

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### MADAME DE STAËL'S ACCOUNT OF GERMAN PHILOSOPHY AND LITERATURE

Four letters, first reprinted by Waller and Glover. They are largely made up, as noted below, of extracts from the *Lectures on English Philosophy*, delivered in the spring of 1812 and not otherwise published by Hazlitt. See vol. II., introductory note to the *Lectures*.

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12. *The article in The Edinburgh Review.* For October 1813. The review was by Jeffrey.  
*According to the prevailing system, etc.* From this point to the end of the second paragraph on p. 15 Hazlitt is drawing on a passage from his lecture 'On the Writings of Hobbes' (vol. II. pp. 124-6), of which he also made use in the 'Prospectus' (*ibid.*, pp. 114-16 and notes).
15. *The following is a summary, etc.* See 'On the Writings of Hobbes' (vol. II. pp. 144-5).
16. *As Madame de Staël expresses it. De l'Allemagne (Œuvres, 1820, xi. 224).*

### THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

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17. '*A justly decried author.*' Locke, *Third Letter to the Bishop of Worcester* (*Works*, Bohn, II. 401).  
'*Fame is no plant,*' etc. *Lycidas*, 78-82.  
*The great defect, etc.* From this point to the top of next page Hazlitt is drawing on a passage of his lecture 'On Locke's Essay' (vol. II. pp. 146-7).
18. '*Harsb and crabbed.*' *Comus*, 476.  
His translator Willich. A. F. M. Willich, author of *Elements of the Critical Philosophy*, containing . . . a view of all the works published by Kant, 1798. The *Critique of Pure Reason* had appeared in 1781.
21. '*And all this,*' etc. Ben Jonson, *The Alchemist*, Act II. Sc. 1.

### THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

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22. '*For men to have recourse,*' etc. Unidentified.
24. '*A dark closet,*' etc. Cf. Locke's *Essay*, II. xi. 17.  
*As this distinction is rather difficult, etc.* At this point Hazlitt is drawing on a passage of his 'Remarks on the Systems of Hartley and Helvetius' (vol. I. p. 69).  
*Mrs. Salmon's . . . wax-figures.* See vol. XVIII., note to p. 218.
26. *All nature, all objects, etc.* At this point Hazlitt is drawing on his lecture 'On Tooke's Diversions' (vol. II. p. 280).
29. '*Tbrills in each nerve,*' etc. Cf. '*Feels at each thread, and lives along the line.*' Pope, *An Essay on Man*, I. 218. The invariable form in which Hazlitt makes the quotation.  
'*Jove's light'nings,*' etc. *The Tempest*, I. 2. 201.

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### THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

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29. *I am aware, etc.* The opening of this paper, to the bottom of the next page, reproduces, with minor modifications, a passage of the lecture 'On Locke's Essay.' See vol. II. pp. 155-7 and notes.
30. Note. For Fearn's book, see *Table-Talk*, vol. VIII. pp. 63-5 and 260-2, and notes.
32. *This faculty of abstraction, etc.* From this point to the top of the next page Hazlitt is drawing on his lecture 'On Abstract Ideas' (vol. II. p. 191).
34. *The knowledge of every finite being rests, etc.* At this point Hazlitt is drawing on his lecture 'On Tooke's Diversions' (vol. II. pp. 282-3).
36. *I will only add, etc.* Cf. the conclusion of the same lecture (*ibid.*, pp. 283-4 and notes).
- Last line. The newspaper adds: 'Another Letter on the *Principles of Human Action* will conclude this series.' The promised letter did not appear.

### [DESDEMONA: A FOOTNOTE]

In the second of the two articles (of August 7, 1814) on 'Mr. Kean's Iago' which Hazlitt contributed to *The Examiner* before he became the dramatic critic of that journal, a footnote occurs which he omitted on reprinting the articles in *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. p. 217 and note), as follows:

'If Desdemona really "saw her husband's visage in his mind," or fell in love with the abstract idea of "his virtues and his valiant parts,"<sup>1</sup> she was the only woman on record, either before or since, who ever did so. Shakespeare's want of penetration in supposing that those are the sort of things that gain the affections, might perhaps have drawn a smile from the ladies, if honest Iago had not checked it by suggesting a different explanation. It should seem by this, as if the rankness and gross impropriety of the personal connection, the difference in age, features, colour, constitution, instead of being the obstacle, had been the motive of the refinement of her choice, and had, by beginning at the wrong end, subdued her to the amiable qualities of her lord. Iago is indeed a most learned and irrefragable doctor on the subject of love, which he defines to be "merely a lust of the blood, and a permission of the will."<sup>2</sup> The idea that love has its source in moral or intellectual excellence, in good nature or good sense, or has any connection with sentiment or refinement of any kind, is one of those preposterous and wilful errors, which ought to be extirpated for the sake of those few persons who alone are likely to suffer by it, whose romantic generosity and delicacy ought not to be sacrificed to the baseness of their nature, but who treading securely the flowery path, marked out for them by poets and moralists, the licensed artificers of fraud and lies, are dashed to pieces down the precipice, and perish without help.'

In the following number of *The Examiner* (August 14, 1814) Leigh Hunt, then in Surrey Gaol, wrote a long reply to this characteristic passage, which he entitled 'Note upon Note, or a word or two on the Passion of Love, in answer to some observations in our last week's Examiner.' The writer in *Blackwood's Magazine* who made it one of his charges against Hazlitt that he 'insinuated that Desdemona was a lewd woman' probably had this passage, and Leigh Hunt's remarks upon it, in mind; although

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Othello*, I. 3. 254-5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, I. 3. 339.

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Hazlitt, in his reply, makes it clear that he takes the charge to apply to *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*. See vol. ix. p. 9, and vol. iv. p. 208.

For controversy between Thomas Barnes, dramatic critic of *The Examiner*, and Hazlitt, arising out of other aspects of the same articles, see vol. xviii. pp. 200 *et seq.*

### ON ROCHEFOUCAULT'S MAXIMS

'Common Places, No. II.,' signed 'W. H.' First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

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37. '*The web of our life,*' etc. *All's Well that Ends Well*, iv. 3. 83.  
*The Practice of Piety*. See vol. vii., note to p. 87.  
*Grove's Ethics*. Henry Grove's (1684-1738) *A System of Moral Philosophy* (1749).  
*De l'Esprit*. Helvetius's famous book (1758).  
 Note. 'Lines written while sailing in a boat at evening.'  
 39. '*Make assurance double sure.*' *Macbeth*, iv. i. 83.  
 '*Get the start,*' etc. *Julius Cæsar*, i. 2. 130.

### EDUCATION OF WOMEN

An omitted concluding paragraph from the 'Round Table' paper, 'On Classical Education.' See vol. iv. p. 6 and note.

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41. *Signor Tramezzani* . . . Mr. Conway. See *A View of the English Stage*.  
 '*He for God only,*' etc. *Paradise Lost*, iv. 299.  
 42. *It has been observed by an ingenious writer of the present day*. See Hazlitt's own remarks in his *Edinburgh Review* paper, 'Standard Novels and Romances' (vol. xvi. p. 22).  
*But one reasonable woman*. Mary Lamb, no doubt. Cf. vol. xvii. p. 133 and note.

### MIND AND MOTIVE

'The Round Table, No. 9,' signed 'W. H.' First reprinted (together with the following essay) by Hazlitt's son in *Winterslow* (1850). The 'Round Table' papers were without title, and, in the case of those which Hazlitt did not reprint, we are dependent on the *Examiner* index. The present paper there figures as 'On the Predominant Principles and Excitements in the Human Mind.' The two papers obviously form a connected whole, and, since Hazlitt supplied no title, that provided by his son (possibly from an autograph note) has been adopted. It will be observed that the subject-matter closely resembles that of the sixth of the *Lectures on English Philosophy* which is missing (vol. ii. p. 292), and on which these papers may have been based.

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43. '*The web of our lives,*' etc. See above, note to p. 37.  
*Says his biographer*. I have not identified the biographer of Antonius Codrus Urcus (1446-1500), Italian philologist, whom Hazlitt quotes.  
 44. '*Friends now fast sworn,*' etc. *Coriolanus*, iv. 4. 12 *et seq.*  
 45. '*The servile slave,*' *The Faerie Queene*, ii. vii. 33.  
*Walk along the parapet wall, etc.* 'The late admirable writer and most kind human being, Charles Lamb . . . could run (as he once actually did) along

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- the top of a high parapet wall in the Temple—so much to the terror of Hazlitt, that the latter cried out, in a sort of rage and cruel transport of sympathy, "Lamb, if you don't come down, I shall push you over." Leigh Hunt, 'Æronautics,' *New Monthly Magazine*, September 1835.
46. 'The toys of desperation.' *Hamlet*, i. 4. 75.  
*A fine observation made by Aristotle. Metaphysics, A i. 980 a, 21.*

### THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

'The Round Table, No. 13,' signed 'W.H.' Without title in the newspaper, but indexed as 'The Love of Power or Action as Main a Principle in the Human Mind as Sensibility to Pleasure or Pain.' First reprinted (as part of the preceding essay) by Hazlitt's son in *Winterslow* (1850).

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49. *Mr. Hobbes says well. Human Nature*, vii. 5, 6 (*Works*, ed. Molesworth, iv. 33).
50. 'He courted a statue,' etc. See vol. viii., note to p. 97. This is Hazlitt's earliest use of the quotation.  
*The different value we set on past and future objects.* See the *Table-Talk* essay, 'On the Past and Future,' in vol. viii.
51. 'Catch glimpses,' etc. Cf. Wordsworth, Sonnet, 'The world is too much with us,' 12.  
*'I also was an Arcadian.'* See vol. viii. note to p. 27.  
*We might answer with Hume.* See *An Inquiry concerning the Human Understanding* (*Works*, 1844, iv. 5 *et seq.*).  
*A metaphysical allegory.* It was with this allegory, and its concluding aspiration, that Hazlitt ended the last of his *Lecture on English Philosophy*, which is missing. See Crabb Robinson's entry of April 27, 1812, reproduced in the present editor's *Life* (p. 145); and cf. vol. ii. p. 293.
52. 'Sit hence no fairy lights,' etc. See vol. xi. note to p. 127.  
*Happy are they, etc.* A favourite passage with Hazlitt, which he repeats here from *A Reply to Malthus* (vol. i. p. 284). Cf. vol. vii., note to p. 242.

### ON MANNER

'The Round Table, No. 18,' unsigned. Portions of this paper were reprinted by Hazlitt in *The Round Table* (vol. iv. pp. 42 *et seq.*). The complete paper was first reprinted by his son under the title 'Matter and Manner' in *Winterslow* (1850).

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53. *The Flower and Leaf.* Cf. vol. v. 27 and note.
56. *Whether Pope was a poet?* See *ante*, pp. 89-92.  
*To return to the subject of our last Number.* The remainder of the essay, with the omission of the second footnote on p. 57, was interpolated by Hazlitt in two portions in the essay 'On Manner' in *The Round Table*. See vol. iv. pp. 44-7 and notes.
57. Note 1. *Castlereagh is intended.*  
 Note 2. 'Those impenetrable whiskers,' etc. Unidentified.  
*Fielding was of opinion.* Cf. *Amelia*, Book v, Chap. ii.  
*Says Don Quixote.* Book iii. Chap. xxv.  
*'To church,' etc. The Canterbury Tales.* The Wife of Bath's Prologue, 593-9.  
*'All which,' etc.* Cf. *Hamlet*, ii. 2. 204.



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### COBBETT AND SHAKESPEAR

An omitted concluding paragraph, headed 'Note Extraordinary,' from the 'Round Table' paper, 'On the Midsummer Night's Dream' (vol. iv. pp. 61-4).

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58. *Last week's Cobbett.* See the *Weekly Political Register* for November 18, 1815, article headed 'On the Subject of Potatoes.'
59. *Mr. Wordsworth's calling Voltaire dull.* See vol. iv. p. 116 and note.  
*Voltaire . . . Cato.* See ante, p. 7 and note.  
*Mr. Locke's admiration of Sir Richard Blackmore.* Cf. vol. v. p. 108.  
*The Duke of Wellington's letter to Lord Castlereagh.* Of September 23, 1815, relative to the dispersal of the Louvre. See vol. xiii., note to p. 213.  
*The Catalogue Raisonné.* See *The Round Table* (vol. iv. pp. 140-51) and Hazlitt's uncollected art criticism in vol. xviii. The *Catalogue* appeared in *The Morning Chronicle* during the autumn and winter of 1815, beginning on September 22.  
*The second Greek scholar . . . the first.* Cf. 'On the Ignorance of the Learned' (vol. viii. p. 73 and notes). Samuel Parr (1747-1825) and Charles Burney (1757-1817) are presumably intended.  
*'Would not swagger,' etc.* Cf. 2 *King Henry IV*, II. 4. 108.  
*'Aggravate his voice.'* *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I. 2. 84.  
*Mr. Cobbett's address.* *Political Register*, July 30, 1802. Cf. vol. xiv. p. 208 and note.

### ON THE DOCTRINE OF PHILOSOPHICAL NECESSITY

'The Round Table, No. 27,' signed 'W.' First reprinted by Waller and Glover. The title is supplied from *The Examiner* index.

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60. *'For I had learnt,' etc.* Wordsworth, *Tintern Abbey*, 95-102, from memory.  
*'Threshold of Jove's throne.'* Cf. 'Before the starry threshold of Jove's court,' *Comus*, I.
61. *A picture by Ludovico Caracci.* This picture is not readily to be identified.
62. *'Praise and blame,' etc.* The quotation from Hobbes's *Tripas* is given from memory. Cf. vol. II. p. 252.  
*The opinion of the Clown.* Cf. Dogberry, 'To be a well-favoured man is the gift of fortune, but to write and read comes by nature.' *Much Ado About Nothing*, III. 3. 15.  
*St. Dunstan's.* 'In the West,' Fleet Street. The old church, as Hazlitt knew it, stood thirty feet further forward than the present building, erected in 1831.
64. *Marvell and his leg of mutton.* Hazlitt refers to the story of Danby's unsuccessful attempt to win over Marvell to the court. One version of the story is that in Danby's presence Marvell summoned his servant and said to him, 'Pray, what had I for dinner yesterday?' 'A shoulder of mutton.' 'And what do you allow me to-day?' 'The remainder hashed.' Marvell then added to Danby, 'And to-morrow, my lord, I shall have the sweet blade-bone broiled.'  
*The words which Madame de Staël . . . addressed.* *De l'Allemagne*, Preface. Cf. vol. xiv. p. 58.  
*We let fall some time ago.* In 'On the Tendency of Sects,' perhaps (vol. iv. pp. 48-9).
65. *'But there is matter,' etc.* Cf. Wordsworth, 'Hart-leap Well,' 95-6.

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### PARALLEL PASSAGES IN VARIOUS POETS

The Round Table, No. 28, signed 'W.' First reprinted by Waller and Glover. The title is supplied from *The Examiner* index.

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65. *Zaire*. 1732.  
 'Soft you,' etc. *Othello*, v. 2. 338 *et seq.*
66. 'Vanished into thin air.' Cf. *The Tempest*, iv. i. 150 and *Macbeth*, i. 5. 5.  
*Mr. William Wade*. Both this writer and his 'lucubrations' referred to by Hazlitt are elusive.  
*Ducis*. Jean François Ducis (1733-1816), who adapted some of Shakespeare's plays for the French stage.  
 'As over-measure.' Cf. 'Enough, with over-measure.' *Coriolanus*, III. 1. 140.  
 'As flat,' etc. Cf. 'He has crushed his nose, Susannah says, as flat as a pancake to his face.' *Tristram Shandy*, Book III. Chap. 27.
67. *Potter*. Robert Potter's (1721-1804) translation of *Æschylus* appeared in 1777.
68. 'When I had gazed,' etc. *Poems on the Naming of Places*, II. 51 *et seq.*  
*We have once already attempted*, etc. In his *Examiner* review of *The Excursion*. See vol. IV. pp. 111-25, and vol. XIX. p. 925.  
 'In my former days of bliss,' etc. From 'The Shepherd's Hunting' (1615).

### [BURKE: A FOOTNOTE]

In his *Examiner* paper of February 4, 1816, 'On Beauty,' Hazlitt has a footnote on Burke which is considerably longer than that which he reprinted in *The Round Table* (vol. IV. p. 71). After 'She glided by him in an instant, as if borne on a cloud,' the note in the newspaper continues: 'Much the same impression which the sight of the Queen of France made on Mr. Burke's brain sixteen years before the French Revolution, did the reading of the New Eloise make on mine at the commencement of it. "Such is the stuff of which our dreams are made!"<sup>1</sup> This man (Burke),' etc. From this point the note is transferred without verbal change to another essay, 'On Good-Nature' (vol. IV. p. 105), but where it breaks off 'This man,—but enough of him here,' the original note to 'On Beauty' continues:

'This man had the impudence to say that an Elector of Hanover was raised to the throne of these kingdoms, "in contempt of the will of the people,"<sup>2</sup> while the hereditary successor was still alive. He was at once a liar, a coward, and a slave; a liar to his own heart, a coward to the success of his own cause, a slave to the power he despised. See his Letter about the Duke of Bedford, in which the man gets the better of the sycophant, and he belabours the Duke in good earnest. It is not a source of regret to reflect that he closed his eyes on the ruin of liberty, which he had been the principal means of effecting, and of his own projects, at the same time. He did not live to see that deliverance of mankind, bound hand and foot into the absolute, lasting, inexorable power of Kings and Priests, which the author of Joan of Arc<sup>3</sup> has so triumphantly celebrated. He did not live to see the sending of the Liberales of Spain to the gallies, and the liberating the Afancesadoes from prison, for which our romantic Laureat, who sees so much farther into futurity than the Edinburgh Reviewers,<sup>4</sup> thanks God. He did not

<sup>1</sup> Burke, *A Letter to a Noble Lord* (Bohn, v. 129), after *The Tempest*, IV. i. 156.

<sup>2</sup> *Reflections on the French Revolution* (ed. Payne, p. 17).

<sup>3</sup> See Southey's *Carmen Triumphale*.

<sup>4</sup> See *ibid.*, Notes.

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live to read that Sonnet<sup>1</sup> to the King which Mr. Wordsworth has written, in imitation of Milton's Sonnet to Cromwell. There is a species of literary prostitution which has sprung up and spread wide in these days, more nauseous and despicable than any recorded in Juvenal. It proves, however, one thing, that is, the force which knowledge and opinion have acquired, and which makes it worth while for power to court and pervert those faculties which were intended to enlighten and reform the world, in order to plunge it into a darkness that may be felt; and slavery, that can only cease by putting a stop to the propagation of the species.'

### MR. LOCKE A GREAT PLAGIARIST

'The Round Table, No. 31,' signed 'W.H.' First reprinted by Waller and Glover. The title is supplied from *The Examiner* index.

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69. 'The very bead,' etc. *Othello*, 1. 3. 80.  
'A justly exploded [decried] author.' See ante, note to p. 17.
70. *Professor Stewart's very elegant Dissertation*. Prefixed to the first volume of Supplement to the 4th and 5th editions of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1816), to which Hazlitt was a contributor.  
'Fame is no plant,' etc. *Lycidas*, 78-82.  
'To trace an error to its source,' etc. Unidentified.
71. 'The greatest and as it were radical distinction,' etc. Bacon, *Aphorisms*, LV.  
'That strain I heard was of a bigger mood.' *Lycidas*, 87.
72. *What is most remarkable*, etc. This passage on wit will be found in an expanded form in *Lectures on the English Comic Writers*. See vol. vi. pp. 18-21.  
*Three papers, which we propose to write*. These papers he did not write for 'The Round Table.' See, however, the introductory lecture, 'On Wit and Humour,' to *The English Comic Writers* (vol. vi.).
73. *The most sensible man of our acquaintance*. Lamb, no doubt.  
*Martinus Scriblerus*. See vol. v. p. 104 and note.  
'The laborious fooleries.' Cf. ante, note to p. 5.
74. 'The tenth transmitter,' etc. Cf. 'No tenth transmitter of a foolish face.' Savage, *The Bastard*, 8.  
'The mind alone is formative.' See ante, p. 26.

### THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

'The Round Table, No. 34,' signed 'W.H.' First reprinted (in summary) by Waller and Glover.

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74. *We have been required to give proof*. In *The Examiner* for March 3, appeared the following note: 'A correspondent who signs himself J.W. thinks we ought to bring proofs of Mr. Locke's want of originality as the founder of a system. We recommend him, if he is curious on this subject, to read the first eighty pages of Hobbes's *Leviathan*, if the name does not alarm him. After that, if he is not satisfied and repeats his request, perhaps we may attend to it.' Hazlitt is here performing his promise.

<sup>1</sup> See vol. iv., note to p. 45.

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75. *The principles of the modern system.* Cf. 'On the Writings of Hobbes' (vol. II. pp. 144-5), and *ante*, pp. 15-16.  
 81. 'The wise,' etc., and footnote. Cf. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, I. 3. 32.  
 83. *The true reason of the fate, etc.* Hazlitt here reproduces the concluding paragraph of his lecture, 'On the Writings of Hobbes' (vol. II. p. 46).

### [SHAKESPEAR'S EXACT DISCRIMINATION OF NEARLY SIMILAR CHARACTERS]

*The Examiner*, May 12, 1816, 'The Round Table, No. 38,' a letter signed 'L. C.' (title supplied from index). This letter was utilised almost in its entirety by Hazlitt in the essay on 'Henry VI' in *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, and is therefore not given in the text. The following omissions and variations may be noted. In the newspaper the letter begins:

'SIR,—It has always appeared to me that Shakespear was scarcely more remarkable for the force and marked contrasts of his characters than for the truth and subtlety with which he has distinguished those which approached the nearest to each other. The former quality seems to have been oftener insisted on, only because it was the more obvious one. The Moor Othello, the gentle Desdemona, the villain Iago, the good-natured Cassio, the fool Roderigo, present a range and variety of character as striking and palpable as that produced by the opposition of costume in a picture. The difference between them stands out to the mind's eye, so that even when we do not think of their actions or sentiments, the idea of their persons is still as present with us as ever. It is the same in Macbeth and Duncan, in Hamlet and the Ghost, in Lear and the Fool, in Falstaff and Prince Henry and Shallow, and so of the rest. These characters and the images they have stamped on the mind are the most opposite conceivable, the interval between them is immense; yet the force and passion with which Shakespear has gone to the very verge of nature in embodying these extreme creations of his imagination, is not greater than the truth and felicity with which he has kept asunder others that are separated almost by imperceptible differences. For instance, the soul of Othello,' etc.

It will be noted that Hazlitt had this passage before him in writing the essay on 'Othello' (vol. IV. p. 200).

The letter continues as in *Characters of Shakespear's Plays* (vol. IV. pp. 293-8), 'We have already marked' to 'pardon his own death.' The ending in the newspaper is:

'I shall conclude this letter with a remark or two on the characters of Shallow and Silence. In general Shallow hectors over him, and Silence merely answers by yea and nay, till in the garden scene Silence, who has got the start in drinking, is emboldened to express his opinion in a song; and having thus broken the ice, enters into familiar discourse with Sir John, who compliments him on his good cheer, and Silence, in return, declares that "he had been merry twice and once in his time." What a confession of excess! What a contrast to the prodigality of this age! What a summary of human life! It is curious that Shakespear should have anticipated in the person of Shallow, who was "in some authority under the King," that disposition to unmeaning tautology, which is the regal infirmity of modern times, and which,' etc.

This paragraph, to 'come cousin' (vol. IV. p. 283), was adapted by Hazlitt in the essay on 'Henry IV.' The letter in the newspaper concludes: 'It cannot be denied that Petter Pindar has copied this style well.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant, L. C.'

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### SHAKESPEAR'S FEMALE CHARACTERS

'The Round Table, No. 43,' unsigned. First reprinted by Waller and Glover. The title is supplied from *The Examiner* index.

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84. *As Miss Peggy meets her husband.* Cf. *The English Comic Writers* (vol. vi. p. 76).  
*'Calls true love,' etc. Romeo and Juliet*, III. 2. 16.  
*We have almost as great an affection, etc.* Hazlitt reproduces this passage (to the end of the first sentence on p. 87) in *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*. See vol. iv. pp. 180-3 and notes.
87. *Desdemona is another instance, etc.* Hazlitt reproduces this passage (to the end of the first paragraph on the next page) in *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*. See vol. iv. pp. 205-6 and notes.

### [CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA]

Hazlitt, according to the index to the *Supplement to the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Editions*, printed with the concluding volume (1824), made in all seven contributions to the work, the article on the 'Fine Arts' in the first volume (1816) and those on James Barry, John Bernard Basedow (1723-90, German educational reformer), John Beckman (1739-1811, German technologist), Xavier Bettinelli (1718-1808, Italian man of letters), George Bernard Bilfinger (1693-1750, German philosopher), and George Augustus Burger (1747-94, German poet), in the second volume (1817). The present editor's *Life* (pp. 197-9) provides confirmation of these attributions of the index. Only two of the articles, however, were of Hazlitt's composition—the 'Fine Arts' and 'James Barry,' reprinted with his art criticism in vol. XVIII.—the remainder being translations undertaken at the request of the editor, Macvey Napier, of biographical compilations appearing in the third, fourth and sixth volumes of the *Biographie Universelle* (Paris, 52 vols., 1811-28), as stated by Hazlitt in his *Reply to 'Z.'* (vol. ix. p. 7). The last four articles enumerated above conclude with a reference to their source ('See *Biographie Universelle*, Tom. iv.' etc.), and prove on comparison to be line-for-line translations. The first translated article, that on J. B. Basedow, does not contain this reference, and runs on, after the conclusion of the translated biographical particulars, to a termination which is Hazlitt's own, as follows:

'Goethe tells an anecdote of going a journey in company with him and Lavater, who fell into a violent dispute about the Trinity. Basedow consoled himself with the hope of getting some beer and a pipe of tobacco at an inn which he saw before them on the road. When they came to it, Goethe made the coachman drive on, to the great chagrin of Basedow, to whom he excused himself by saying, that the sign of the inn was *two triangles*, and as he had such an aversion to one triangle (the scholastic emblem of the Trinity), he was afraid the sight of two might overcome him. This conceit, according to Goethe, pacified our anti-trinitarian divine.

'Basedow, in his general writings, endeavoured to apply philosophy to practical purposes, and to give a more popular air to his reasonings than had been usual with his countrymen before his time. He held truth to be of little value without practice, and, indeed, he held its essence to depend chiefly on its utility. He considered external or speculative truth to be a very vague and doubtful thing; and that it is principally the consequences of things to the mind itself, that is, a *moral necessity*, which determines it to believe strongly and consistently on any point, so that that is

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true to each individual which makes the most lasting impression on his mind, and which he feels to be necessary to his happiness. Thus he regarded practical good as the test of speculative truth. He gave great weight to the principle of analogy, and funded the doctrine of a Providence on this principle. He considered common sense as one ingredient in philosophical reasoning, and rejected all systems which appeared to him to exclude it; such as idealism, the doctrine of monads, and a pre-established harmony. His favourite adage in his system of education, was *to follow Nature*. He wished the mind to be led to knowledge, virtue, and religion, by gentle means, instead of those of constraint and terror. Indeed, his principles on this subject are very nearly the same as those of Locke and Rousseau; and he seems to have done little else than to have given currency in Germany to the same reasonings which those philosophers had taught before him in England and France. He insisted on the disuse of the preposterous and unhealthy dresses used by children and their parents, such as stays, swaddling-clothes, tight bandages round the neck, the knees, &c. He recommended exercise and hardy sports as necessary to the health and activity of the body. He proposed to exercise the judgment by teaching a knowledge of things, and not merely to load the memory with words. He preferred the practical sciences to the speculative, the living to the dead languages, modern to ancient history, things which are more near to those which are more remote. In fine, most of his principles were in themselves sound and good, and have in fact exerted their influence on the actual progress of civilization; they were only erroneous from the excess to which he sometimes appears to have carried them; partly from the natural vehemence of his mind, partly from the natural tendency to paradox on the side of new opinions. Paradox, by exciting attention, and enlisting the passions, is perhaps necessary to contend against prejudice; common sense and reason are lost sight of by both parties during the combat, but in the end they prevail, if they have fair play allowed them. Thus, in the present instance, it is now generally admitted, that something besides the classics is necessary to a liberal education; nor is it thought requisite to arrive at this conclusion through the antithesis to the vulgar opinion of his day set up by Basedow, viz., that the classics are of no use at all in a rational system of education.

Articles proposed by Hazlitt on 'The Ideal' (vol. xviii. p. 435), 'Colouring,' 'Drawing,' 'The Picturesque' (*Life*, p. 199) and 'Bonaparte' (*ibid.*, p. 228), were not entrusted to him, and on being offered the 'Drama' in 1818 he declined it, the subject being handled instead by Walter Scott.

### ON THE QUESTION WHETHER POPE WAS A POET

Signed 'W.H.' First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

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91. '*The pale reflex,*' etc. *Romeo and Juliet*, III. 5. 20.  
       '*In fortune's ray,*' etc. *Troilus and Cressida*, I. 3. 47-54.
92. '*Gnarled oak*' . . . '*the soft myrtle.*' *Measure for Measure*, II. 2. 116-17.  
       '*Calm contemplation,*' etc. Thomson, *The Seasons*, Autumn, 1277.

### ON THE OPERA

'The Little Hunch-Back, No. ii,' signed 'W.H.' First reprinted by Hazlitt's son in *Literary Remains* (1836). The present text is revised in accordance with Hazlitt's corrections in his own copy of *The Yellow Dwarf* in the British Museum, where it is marked in his hand for inclusion, with other essays, in *Political Essays*. It was, however, not so included, no doubt by his own later decision.

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92. 'The glass of fashion,' etc. *Hamlet*, III. 1. 161.  
 93. 'The fool of the senses.' Cf. *Macbeth*, II. 1. 44.  
 1. 4. 'Waving in a gay, fantastic round' in newspaper text.  
 1. 7. 'Again disappoints us' in newspaper text.  
 'How happy,' etc. *The Beggar's Opera*, Act II. Sc. 2.  
 94. First line. 'Us' omitted in newspaper text.  
 95. 1. 3. 'Is proper' added by Hazlitt to newspaper text.  
 1. 6. 'It is calculated' added by Hazlitt to newspaper text.  
 'With some sweet,' etc. *Macbeth*, v. 3. 43.  
 'The cloister'd heart,' etc. Cf. *ante*, p. 52 and note.  
 1. 22. Altered by Hazlitt from the sentence in the newspaper, which reads :  
 'and there is hardly a vice for which the mind on coming out of the Opera is  
 not prepared, no virtue of which it is capable !'  
 'The flower of Britain's warriors,' etc. Southey, *Carmen Nuptiale*, 16.  
 96. *A contemporary critic*. Schlegel, no doubt. Cf. *A View of the English Stage*,  
 vol. v. p. 324.

### [HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF SHAKESPEARE]

Two letters from Hazlitt under this heading appeared in Constable's *Edinburgh Magazine* for January and September 1819. The first begins as follows :

'Mr. Editor, I daresay you will agree with me in thinking, that whatever throws light on the dramatic productions of Shakespeare, deserves to be made public. I have already, in the volume called *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* [see vol. IV. pp. 218-21], shewn, by a reference to the passages in North's translation of Plutarch, his obligations to the historian in his *Coriolanus*, and the noble way in which he availed himself of the lights of antiquity in composing that piece. I shall, with your permission, pursue the subject in the present and some future articles. The parallel is even more striking between the celebrated trial-scene in *Henry VIII.*, and the following narrative of that event, as it actually took place, which is to be found in Cavendish's *Negotiations of Cardinal Wolsey*, &c. A lengthy quotation follows (see *Temple Classics* edition, pp. 107-16), which Hazlitt makes, not from S. W. Singer's edition of the *Life* 'from the original manuscript' (1815), but from the *Harleian Miscellany* text (1744-6) of the first edition of 1641. (Cf. vol. VII. pp. 254-5, and vol. XIII., note to p. 47.) The letter concludes : 'In another article I shall give some remarks on this subject, and the passages in Hollingshed on which *Macbeth* is, in a great measure, founded. I am, Sir, your humble servant, W. Hazlitt. London, Nov. 13, 1818.'

The second letter begins, without reference to the promise contained in the concluding paragraph of the first, as follows :

'Mr. Editor, The following passage in North's translation of Plutarch will be found to have been closely copied in the scene between Brutus and his wife in *Julius Cæsar*' [a long quotation from Plutarch—see *Temple Classics* edition, vol. IX. pp. 256-58—follows, and Hazlitt continues] : Again, the following curious account, extracted from Magellan's Voyage to the South Seas, may throw light on the origin of the Tempest, and the character of Caliban. The mention of the god Setebos seems decisive of the identity of the source from which he borrowed.' The letter concludes with an extract from Magellan's Voyage (see Hakluyt Society edition, 1874, p. 53) and is without signature.

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GUY FAUX

Signed 'Z.' First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

For references to this essay by Hazlitt and to Lamb's suggestion of the subject see 'Elia' in *The Spirit of the Age* (vol. xi. p. 181 and note) and 'Of Persons One Would Wish to have Seen' (vol. xvii. p. 122 and note). Two letters from Hazlitt to Taylor and Hessey sold at Sotheby's in November 1933 show that it was written in June 1821 as a 'Table-Talk' for *The London Magazine*. On its being declined for that purpose, Hazlitt printed it in three parts in *The Examiner* in November.

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96. *Mr. Hogg's Jacobite Relics*. Published in 2 vols. in 1819. In the Introduction Hogg says, 'And now, when the horrors of the Catholic religion have ceased to oppress the minds of men, there is but one way of thinking on the rights of the Stuarts throughout the realm.'  
*A Popish Priest*. Guy Fawkes (1570-1606) was not a priest.
97. 'The best of cut-throats.' *Macbeth*, III. 4. 17.
98. *Regulus*. The stories of the self-sacrifice of Regulus and of Codrus, the last King of Athens, are familiar.  
*The Spanish conqueror and hero*. Cortes, presumably, and the massacre at Cholula (1519), are alluded to.  
*The compunctious visitings of nature*. *Macbeth*, I. 5. 46.
99. *Greater love than this, etc.* Adapted from *St. John*, xv. 13.  
*The spirit is willing, etc.* *S. Matthew*, xxvi. 41.  
*We talk indeed of flinging the keys of the House of Commons, etc.* The allusion is to a passage in John Cam Hobhouse's pamphlet, *A Trifling Mistake*, for which as a breach of privilege he was committed to Newgate in 1819.  
*Margaret Lambrun*. This story is told as a 'popular historical tradition' by Miss Strickland in her *Lives of the Queens of England*.
100. *Sandt*. Karl Ludwig Sand (1795-1820), who had assassinated Kotzebue the dramatist (March 23, 1819).  
*'Well done, etc.* *S. Matthew*, xxv. 21.  
*'No dim doubts alloy.'* Lamb, 'On the Celebrated Picture by Lionardo da Vinci, called the Virgin of the Rocks.'  
*'Quiring, etc.* *The Merchant of Venice*, v. I. 62.
101. *'This night, etc.* Cf. *S. Luke*, xxiii. 43.  
*'Dross compared, etc.* Cf. *Romans*, viii. 18.  
*'Disembowelled, etc.* Burke, *Reflections on the French Revolution* (ed. Payne, p. 101).  
*The Constitutional Association*. See vol. VIII, note to p. 190.  
*The concealed Editor of Blackwood's Magazine*. This question of the editorship of Blackwood had recently (Feb. 16, 1821) led to the fatal duel between John Scott and Lockhart's friend, Christie.  
*'The infinite agitation of wit.'* Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, Book I. iv. 5.  
*'The soul of goodness, Henry V.,* IV. I. 4.
102. *'According to knowledge, Romans,* x. 2.
103. *'A consummation, etc.* *Hamlet*, III. I. 63.  
*I remember once observing to Wilkie*. Whom he knew through Haydon and the Hunts, from about 1815. Cf. vol. XI. p. 200.  
*'A king is but a king [man], etc.* *Reflections on the French Revolution* (ed. Payne, p. 90).  
*'As the vine, etc.* *Paradise Lost*, IV. 307.



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103. 'Through the airy region,' etc. *Romeo and Juliet*, II. 2. 21.  
 105. Note. 'As men should serve a cucumber,' etc. *The Beggar's Opera*, Act 1. Sc. 1.  
 106. 'Bears a charmed life.' *Macbeth*, v. 8. 12.  
 'All mortal consequences.' *Ibid.*, v. 3. 5.  
 'Set duty [honour] in one eye,' etc. *Julius Caesar*, I. 2. 86.  
 'Set but a Scotsman,' etc. Burns, *The Author's Earnest Cry and Prayer*, etc., Postscript.  
 'Happy warrior.' See Wordsworth's 'Character of a Happy Warrior' (1807).  
 'Within his bosom reigns,' etc. Home, *Douglas*, Act IV. Sc. 1.  
 107. *The Cid*. Southey's translation of the *Chronicle of the Cid* was published in 1808.  
 111. *Mr. Kean*. An American lion was presented to Kean by Sir Edward Tucker. Barry Cornwall (*Life of Edmund Kean*, II. 135) says that 'it amused the tragedian (who was fond of simple pleasures) to allure his acquaintance into the room, and set them face to face with the beast.'  
 'Masterless passion,' etc. *The Merchant of Venice*, IV. 1. 51 (Pope's text).  
 'The shot of accident,' etc. *Othello*, IV. 1. 278.  
*Like Hotspur*. Cf. I *Henry IV.*, II. 4. 116-17.  
 112. *Regnault de St. Jean Angely*. Michel Louis Étienne, Comte Regnaud de Saint Jean D'Angely (1762-1819), a well-known politician of the Revolution and under Buonaparte. The reference seems to be to his conduct in 1814 when in command of the National Guard at Paris.  
 'Be mine to read,' etc. Gray, Letter to West (*Letters*, ed. Tovey, I. 97).  
 'From worldly care,' etc. *The Faerie Queene*, I. IV. 20.

## PULPIT ORATORY, ETC.

Unsigned. First reprinted by Hazlitt's son in *The Round Table* (1841).

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113. 'Got the start,' etc. Cf. *Julius Caesar*, I. 2. 130.  
 'Kingly Kensington.' Swift's Ballad, 'Duke Upon Duke,' St. 14.  
*Lord Lansdown*. The third Marquis of Lansdowne (1780-1863), Chancellor of the Exchequer in the 'All the Talents' ministry, and cousin of the third Lord Holland.  
*Lady Bluemount*. Lady Beaumont presumably, the wife of Wordsworth's friend, Sir George Howland Beaumont.  
*Mr. Botherby*. ? William Sotheby (1757-1833), whose persistent attempts as a dramatic author may explain the nickname.  
*The 'Talking Potato'*. Cf. the footnote with vol. XII. pp. 101, 183, and vol. XIX. p. 109.  
*Mr. Theodore Flash*. Theodore Hook, no doubt.  
 Note. *Mr. Dubois*. Edward Dubois (1774-1850), wit and journalist.  
 'Rose and expectancy,' etc. Cf. *Hamlet*, III. 1. 161.  
 14. *Haydon's picture of Lazarus*. Exhibited at the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, in March 1823.  
*Rob Roy, Macbriar is come again*. Sic in magazine. Rob Roy in Scott's novel of the title (1817): the Reverend Ephraim Macbriar in *Old Mortality* (1816).  
 'His foot mercurial,' etc. *Cymbeline*, IV. 2. 310.  
 'The iron,' etc. *Psalms*, cv. 18.  
*We saw him . . . at the Black Bull in Edinburgh*. In 1822. Cf. *Life*, p. 342.  
*Spagnoletti*. Sic in magazine. Josef or Jusepe Ribera, otherwise Lo Spagnoletto (1588-1656). Cf. vol. X. pp. 70, 197.

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115. 'Come, let me clutch thee.' *Macbeth*, II. 1. 34.  
*Wafting you, etc.* 'And waft a sigh from Indus to the Pole.' Pope, *Eloisa to Abelard*, 58.
116. *Said a Scotchman.* Wilkie. See ante, p. 103 and note.
118. 'Spins [draweth out] the thread,' etc. *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 1. 18.  
*'A loop or peg' [no hinge nor loop], etc.* *Otello*, III. 3. 366.  
*'Fire hot from Hell.'* Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, III. 1. 271.
119. *The great Jurisconsult.* Bentham.  
*Couches the blind sight.* 'Surgery. To remove a cataract from.' N.E.D.  
*Description of . . . the swimmer.* Quoted by Hazlitt in *Lectures on the Age of Elizabeth* (vol. vi. pp. 323-4).
120. *Mr. Croly.* George Croly (1780-1860), a regular contributor to *Blackwood's Magazine*, had published *Paris in 1815* (1817).
121. 'Best virtue.' Cf. *All's Well That Ends Well*, IV. 3. 84.  
*'We pause for a reply.'* Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, III. 2. 36.
122. 'Taint in him.' Cf. vol. XII. p. 379.  
*'The powers that be.'* *Romans*, XIII. 1.  
*Daniel Wilson.* Daniel Wilson (1778-1858), at this time incumbent of St. John's Chapel, Bedford Row, Bloomsbury, afterwards Bishop of Calcutta.  
*'Ob! for an eulogy,' etc.* Cf. 'Oh, for a curse to kill with.' Otway, *Venice Preserved*, Act II. Sc. 2.

## COMMON PLACES

Unsigned, 'to be continued occasionally.' First reprinted by W. C. Hazlitt in *The Round Table*, etc. (Bohn, 1871). In *The Literary Examiner* they appeared as follows: I.-XVIII., September 6; XIX.-XLV., September 13; XLVI.-LIII., October 11; LIV.-LIX., October 25; LX.-LXI., November 8; LXII.-LXXXIII., November 15; LXXXIV.-LXXXV., November 22; LXXXVI.-LXXXII., November 29; LXXXIII.-LXXXVII., December 13.

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125. 'A parson in a tye-wig.' See vol. IV., note to p. 9.  
*One of the happiest ideas.* Leigh Hunt's, in *The Feast of the Poets*.
127. XLVIII. Hazlitt develops the aspiration expressed in this aphorism in the essay 'On Personal Identity' (vol. XVII. pp. 268-9).
128. 'According to our own deserts,' etc. Cf. *Hamlet*, II. 2. 560.  
 Note. Home's collected works were published in 1822, with a memoir by Henry Mackenzie, author of *The Man of Feeling*.
129. 'The true fuller's earth,' etc. Cf. 'For time, like fuller's earth, takes out each stain.' Peter Pindar, *Lyric Odes*, VII. 14.  
*Mr. William Mudford.* Cf. 'Illustration of a Hack-Writer,' in vol. XIX. LVIII. Hazlitt reproduces the whole of this 'Common Place' as the concluding paragraph of the *Plain Speaker* essay 'On the Portrait of an English Lady.' See vol. XII. pp. 292-4 and notes.
131. 'Were I as tedious,' etc. *Much Ado About Nothing*, III. 5. 23.
132. 'I am Misanthropos,' etc. *Timon of Athens*, IV. 3. 53.  
*'The cruel sunsbine,' etc.* Cf. Armstrong, *The Art of Preserving Health*, IV.
133. 'In its vacant interlunar cave.' *Samson Agonistes*, 89.  
*Slop raving.* Dr. Stoddart, in *The New Times*. Cf. vol. X. p. 142 and note.  
*'To play with Wisdom.'* 'Play with reason' is *Measure for Measure*, I. 2. 196.
134. 'In spite of pride,' etc. Pope, *An Essay on Man*, I. 293.  
 LXX. Hazlitt reproduces this 'Common Place' as a footnote to the *Plain Speaker* essay, 'On the Portrait of an English Lady.' See vol. XII. p. 292 and notes.

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135. 'The earth spins round,' etc. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, viii. 164-5.  
 136. *Mr. Matthews at home.* See vol. v., note to p. 281.  
*A man of the name of Bruce.* James George Bruce. For the circumstances of his case see an article, 'Monstrous Treatment of Mr. Bruce,' in *The Examiner* of June 18, 1820.  
 'Coil and pudder.' Cf. *King Lear*, iii. 2. 50 (Pope's text).  
 'The Queen's name,' etc. 'Besides, the King's name is a tower of strength.' *Richard III*, v. 3. 12.  
 137. *Lady of Loretto.* See vol. xvii., note to p. 307.  
 'A gentle Husber,' etc. *The Faerie Queene*, i. iv. 13.  
*Mr. Cobbett alone was not invited.* The editor of *The Literary Examiner* says, in a footnote, 'This is *bien trouvé*, but not quite correct.'  
*Bergami.* Bartolomeo Bergami, equerry and later chamberlain to Queen Caroline, his association with whom was exhaustively investigated at the trial of 1820.  
 138. 'What went they forth,' etc. Cf. *S. Matthew*, xi. 7.  
*The author of the love-letters, etc.* Cf. vol. vii. p. 194 and note.  
 'Ob, the wonderful works of nature.' Farquhar, *The Recruiting Officer*, Act II. Sc. 3.  
 'The primrose path,' etc. *Hamlet*, i. 3. 50.  
 141. 'Via Goodman Dull,' etc. *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 1. 156.

### REMARKS ON A PARAGRAPH IN *THE TIMES*, ETC.

Unsigned. Now first reprinted.

For the occasion of this article see Hazlitt's *Edinburgh Review* paper, 'The Periodical Press,' vol. xvi. pp. 211 *et seq.* The *Review*, although dated May, was perhaps published later, since *The Times* notice of the article appeared on August 28, 1823. It occupied the position of second leading-article, and began: 'We are not regular readers of the *Edinburgh Review*: it has long fallen from that eminence, merited or not, which made it a sort of duty not to be entirely ignorant of its contents. Its present contributors, for the most part, are lads at the two English Universities, or law-students, yet innocent of law, who have now and then occasion for a few guineas beyond their quarter's allowance, and to whose wants Mr. Jeffrey generously administers by paying 20 l. a sheet for their crude lucubrations. The main prop and stay of the *Review* for moral, political, critical, and metaphysical discussion is poor Wm. Hazlitt, whose malignity even is not sufficient, in our mind, to convert our pity for his infirmities into hatred for his mischievous intentions. Such being the present character of the *Review*, it is no wonder that we have neglected of late to peruse its contents with periodical exactness, and its late violent and unprincipled attack upon us would consequently have escaped our notice but for one of those good-natured friends who are proverbially ready to acquaint a man with all the civil things that are said about him. So admonished, we have read the article on the "periodical press," in the last number, and we are really puzzled to decide whether we felt more contempt for its praise of some of our contemporaries, or for its abuse of ourselves. We certainly shall not stop to vindicate our literary pretensions before the bar of such a writer and his small fry of associates from the unsuccessful candidates for Cambridge and Oxford prizes.' *The Times* had (presumably with knowledge) printed a review of marked tolerance of 'such a writer's' *Liber Amoris* as recently as May 30, and had been involved in *John Bull's* 'exposure' in consequence (see vol. ix. p. 262). It would not, perhaps, be unnatural that Walter should issue instructions for the present somewhat over-emphatic repudiation.

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142. '*A small fry of critics,*' etc. See quotation, above.  
*The Times Editor puts a serious question, etc.* In his concluding paragraph :  
 'One word more and we have done. Does Mr. Jeffrey entertain so mean an opinion of the sagacity of the people of England, as to think that a paper, without the assistance of any party, could lead (as he asserts) the public mind of England, and at the same time be dull, ignorant and venal?' See Hazlitt's article, '*The Periodical Press*' (vol. xvi. pp. 224-6).  
 '*The devil a puritan,*' etc. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, II. 3. 159.  
*Mr. Thomas Inkle.* See *The Spectator*, No. 11.  
 '*The right, because the just course.*' '*The Times* is the ONLY journal that has made any great independent effort on any critical public occasion. Other papers (we do not mention it as a matter of blame) have all advocated the side which the party they have espoused adopted, and never felt themselves at liberty to deviate from the strict line of dependent service. *The Times* alone, uninfluenced by any party, and we can most solemnly assert, actuated only by what, after the best consideration, appeared the right, because the just course, has frequently thrown itself into the breach.'  
*Only one man . . . was forward to applaud.* Lord Sidmouth, the Home Secretary, he means.  
 143. '*Scared at the sound himself had made.*' Cf.  
     'And back recoiled, he knew not why,  
     Even at the sound himself had made.'  
     Collins, *The Passions*, 19-20.  
*The 'infirmities' of Mr. Hazlitt . . . 'malignity.'* See introductory quotation.  
*The Times Editor speaks of Mr. Hazlitt as a discarded servant.* 'Formerly, we should have been astonished that so base and malignant a calumny could have found its way into a work with any pretensions to character; the late conduct of the *Edinburgh Review* forbids all wonder on that score; but the editor should be cautious how he allows a discarded servant to bespatter and scandalize his employer.' For the circumstances in which Hazlitt resigned from the dramatic criticism of *The Times* see his preface to *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. p. 174) and the present editor's *Life*.

### THE DANDY SCHOOL

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143. *Vivian Grey.* Disraeli's first novel, published 1826-7. The dedication was as follows: 'To the best and greatest of men I dedicate these volumes. He, for whom it is intended, will accept and appreciate the compliment: those, for whom it is not intended, will—do the same.'  
*Austrian Catechism.* I have not identified this allusion.  
 144. *Almack's.* Assembly Rooms (now known as 'Willis's Rooms'), in King Street, St. James's.  
 145. *Long's.* See vol. VIII., note to p. 202.  
*The Whole Duty of Man.* See vol. IV., note to p. 235.  
*Mr. Martin's bill for humanity to animals.* Richard Martin's (1754-1834) bill 'to prevent the cruel and improper treatment of cattle' (the first of its kind in Great Britain) became law in 1822. He was one of the founders of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in 1824.  
*Mr. Croker . . . does not know where Bloomsbury Square is.* See vol. XVIII., note to p. 410.

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146. *Sir Sedley Clarendels and Meadowses*. In *Camilla* and *The Wanderer*, respectively. 'Comforted with their bright radiance,' etc. Cf. *All's Well That Ends Well*, 1. 1. 100-1.  
'*The court*,' etc. Cf. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, III. 2. 218.
147. *Sayings and Doings*. The first series appeared in 1824, the second in 1825 and the third in 1828.  
'*Society of Authors*.' See vol. XII., note to p. 105.
148. *A newspaper back of this description*. Wainewright, for example. Cf. 'On Vulgarity and Affectation' in *Table Talk* (vol. VIII.), and Hazlitt's dramatic criticism for *The London Magazine* (vol. XVIII. p. 343 and note).  
*Mr. Vivacity Dull*. A character in *Vivian Grey*, said to represent Horace Twiss.
149. *Dubs Mr. Waitbman Lord Waitbman*. Cf. vol. x. p. 246 and note.

## QUERIES AND ANSWERS; OR THE RULE OF CONTRARY

Unsigned. First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

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150. *Thimble was a great man in the O. P. Row*. Cf. a passage of the essay 'On the Conversation of Lords' (vol. XVII. p. 164). I have not identified the person here referred to as 'Thimble.'

## GRAVE IMPOSTURE

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings: First Series*.

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150. '*Bottom, thou art translated!*' *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, III. 1. 125.
151. *Like Lingo*. The schoolmaster in O'Keefe's *The Agreeable Surprise*.  
*The last administration*. The short-lived Goderich ministry (August, 1827-January, 1828), which followed on the death of Canning.  
*Omne ignotum pro magnifico est*. Tacitus, *Agricola*, xxx.  
'*Ter felices*,' etc. Horace, *Odes*, I. 13.  
'*A liar from the beginning*.' Farquhar, *Recruiting Officer*, Act IV. Sc. II.  
*D—w*. George Dawe (1781-1829), presumably, made R.A. in 1814. Cf. vol. VIII. p. 270 and note.

## BRUMMELLIANA

Signed 'Z.' First reprinted in *New Writings: First Series*.

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152. *Beau Brummell*. George Bryan Brummell (1778-1840).  
'*A species alone*.' Cowley, *The Praise of Pindar*.  
'*By happiness or pains*.' Pope, *Epistle to Mr. Jervas*, 68.  
'*A sound so fine*,' etc. Knowles, *Virginius*, Act V. Scene II.  
*We quoted the other day*. The anecdote had appeared in the journal's 'Miscellanea' a fortnight before, as follows: 'When Brummell was the great oracle on coats, the Duke of Leinster was very anxious to bespeak the approbation of the "Emperor of the Dandies" for a "cut" which he had just patronised. The Duke, in the course of his eulogy on his Schneider, had frequently occasion to use the words "my coat." "Your coat, my dear fellow," said Brummell, "what coat?" "Why, this coat," said Leinster, "this coat that I have on." Brummell, after regarding the vestment with an air of infinite

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- scorn, walked up to the Duke, and taking the collar between his finger and thumb, as if fearful of contamination—"What, Duke, do you call *that thing* a coat?"
- Finer 'fooling.'* Cf. *Twelfth Night*, II. 3. 33.
153. *Ubi tot nitent.* Cf. Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 351.  
*'A subtler web,' etc.* *The Faerie Queene*, II. xii. 77.  
*'High fantastical.'* *Twelfth Night*, I. i. 15.  
*'Great idea in his mind.'* Cf. Thomson, *Castle of Indolence*, stanza 59.  
*'Bound him with Styx,' etc.* Pope, *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*, 90.
154. *'His lodging . . . on the cold ground.'* Sir W. D'Avenant, *The Rivals*.  
*Sir Lumley Skeffington.* Fop and playwright (1771-1850), for whom see Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* and Moore's *Twopenny Post Bag*.  
*Giorgione.* The newspaper has the misprint 'Gingoni.'  
*The year 1815.* In which Buonaparte was defeated, Byron married, and Brummell cast out from the grace of the Prince Regent. The Beau, no doubt, was responsible for the concatenation.

## CIVILIZATION OF AFRICA

Unsigned. Now first reprinted.

This trifle is very like Hazlitt, and very unlike the contributions of everyone else to *The London Weekly Review*. It is therefore reprinted as his.

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155. *Pacho.* Jean Raimond Pacho (1794-1829), French traveller. Messrs. Chauvet and Drovetti I do not find.

## BYRON AND WORDSWORTH

Unsigned. First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

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155. *Lord Byron's haste to return a volume of Spenser.* See Leigh Hunt's *Lord Byron and his Contemporaries*, I. 77.  
*'A cure for a narrow and selfish mind.'* Cf. *Reflections on the French Revolution* (ed. Payne, p. 164).
156. *'Ab! voilà de la pervenche!'* *Confessions*, Part I. Liv. vi.  
*Pompey's Pillar.* The granite column erected at Alexandria, A.D. 302, in honour of the Emperor Diocletian. So called by old travellers.  
*'Slow and creeping foot of time.'* Cf. *As You Like It*, II. 7. 112.  
*Note. Ada Reis; a Tale,* by Lady Caroline Lamb (1785-1828), published in 1823.

## THE MODERN GRADUS AD PARNASSUM

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings: First Series*. The article appeared as 'The Modern Gradus ad Parnassum, No. 1,' but the series was not continued, owing to Hazlitt's departure for Paris in the following month to complete *The Life of Napoleon*.

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157. *H. . . . S.* The 'H.' of the dialogue is, of course, Hazlitt: the other speaker probably need not be identified with any one person in particular.

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157. *As Sir Philip Sidney says.* 'Chaucer undoubtedly did excellently in his *Troilus and Cressid.*' *Apologie for Poetrie* (ed. Churton Collins, p. 51).  
*Lord Byron's boat.* In *Don Juan*, canto ii. The rainbow is described in the ninety-first stanza.  
*Mr. Martin, the painter.* See vol. xi. p. 251 and note.  
*'Bound him with friends [Styx], etc.* See above, note to p. 153.  
*'Looks abroad into universality.'* Bacon, *Advancement of Learning.*  
*'Bairns [Weans] and wife,' etc.* Burns, *Epistle to Dr. Blacklock.*
158. *Mohawk Reviewer.* John Scott, who fell in a duel with Lockhart's friend Christie, dubbed *Blackwood's* 'The Mohock Magazine' in the series of articles (*London Magazine*, November and December, 1820) which were the cause of the challenge.  
*Mr. Lecturer on Moral Philosophy.* John Wilson (1785-1854), the presiding genius of *Blackwood's Magazine* (elected to the chair of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh in 1820 with the support of Sir Walter Scott). His review of *Lord Byron*, to which Hazlitt is here addressing himself, may be studied in the magazine for March, 1828. It is a characteristic effusion, running to forty-seven closely set pages, and handling with severity 'Hunt, Hazlitt and other unprincipled infidels,' including Shelley and Keats.  
*Chaldee Manuscript.* Lockhart and Wilson's Biblical parody, in *Blackwood's* first number (August, 1817) under the new editorship.  
*The phrase 'grandeur of the glooms.'* Quoted on the previous page by Leigh Hunt. The phrase 'the grandeur of the dooms' is, of course, Keats's (*Endymion*, l. 20), and Leigh Hunt was presumably adapting it, as Hazlitt was aware.
159. *Charged by the sages of Mr. Blackwood.* Hazlitt's memory here seems to be slightly at fault. It was not *The Island*, in June 1823, but *The Age of Bronze*, in April, which was the subject of these or similar charges. 'The author of the *Age of Bronze*,' we read, 'the publisher thereof—and the paid puffers in the Radical newspapers, all know, that when they attribute the doggel [*sic*] to Lord Byron—they are a pack of liars.' The publisher is 'an impertinent impostor,' 'a fool and a liar, in league with fools and liars.' Again: 'The Cockneys have told the public, through their mouthpiece Hazlitt, that they have been damned by us, and that not a single Christian will look at any of their productions, lest suspicion might fall upon him of being acquainted with the author. The knaves, therefore, call themselves "Byron"!' (*Blackwood's Magazine*, April 1823, p. 457.) The *Age of Bronze* was, of course, Byron's; but we do not seem to hear of the proposed legal action in his published correspondence. He had offered, however, to come to England in the previous year when John Hunt was prosecuted for the publication of his *Vision of Judgment*. (*Correspondence*, ed. Murray, 1922, II. 240.)  
*Mr. Jerdan.* For whom see vol. XII., note to p. 123. He may have echoed the assertion in conversation, but in *The Literary Gazette* he contented himself with treating *The Age of Bronze* (April 5, 1823) as the work of 'the Pisan junta'—i.e. Byron, Leigh Hunt and those who were at this date associated with them in their quarterly, *The Liberal*, of whom Hazlitt (in London) was one. *The Island* Jerdan reviewed (June 21, 1823) as by Byron.
- Hic niger est, etc.* Horace, *Satires*, I. iv. 85.
160. *'Dropt from the zenith,' etc.* *Paradise Lost*, I. 745.  
*'Damasco and Morocco,' etc.* *Ibid.*, I. 584.  
*'And thin partitions,' etc.* Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, I. 164.  
*'Light as the foam,' etc.* Cf. Cowper, *The Task*, vi. 156.
161. *The portrait by Titian.* Cf. vol. x. p. 270 and note.

## NOTES

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161. *It was I who introduced him to Landor.* In Florence, in 1825. We do not learn this elsewhere.  
 K—. Seymour Kirkup (1788-1880), the artist, who contributed the account of Hazlitt in Florence to Forster's *Life of Landor*.  
 162. *George Dyer.* For whom see vol. xii. pp. 43 and 220 and notes. The story of the coat-sleeve is well known.  
*The trick he played Lamb.* This one does not appear to have been told, and, as Hazlitt wrote no 'next,' we may never know it.

### SELF-LOVE AND BENEVOLENCE

Unsigned. First reprinted by Hazlitt's son in *Sketches and Essays* (1839).

As in the case of the essay 'Of Persons One Would Wish to have Seen,' the initials of the speakers in this dialogue were disguised for publication in *The New Monthly Magazine*. Cf. vol. xvii. p. 401. In the present text they have been restored for the first time to the form in which Hazlitt wrote them, after comparison with the MS. of an early draft of the dialogue (entitled 'On the Principle of Self-Love') in the possession of Mr. A. C. Goodyear.

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162. A. *Sic* in the magazine and in Hazlitt's son's text. Hitherto unidentified, the speaker is, no doubt, William Ayrton, who figures under his initial also in 'Of Persons One Would Wish to have Seen' (vol. xvii.) and 'On the Conversation of Authors' (vol. xii.).  
 H. 'B' in the magazine, and in Hazlitt's son's text. Hazlitt himself, of course.  
*My friend Mr. Beyle.* See vol. ix. pp. 250, 278, and the introductory note to *The Life of Napoleon* (vol. xiii.).  
 163. *There needs no ghost, etc. Hamlet, I. 5. 125.*  
*'Sound significant.'* Cf.  
     'Assign'd  
     To each his name significant,'  
     Cowper, 'Yardley Oak,' 175-6.  
 166. '*Nil humani, etc.* Terence, *Heauton-Timoroumenos*, I. 1.  
*'Greater love,' etc.* Cf. *St. John*, xv. 13.  
 168. *Captain B.* 'Captain C.' in the magazine and in Hazlitt's son's text. Captain Burney, no doubt.  
 169. '*Letting I should not, etc.* Cf. *Macbeth*, I. 7. 45.  
 170. '*Throw honour [physic] to the dogs, etc.* *Ibid.*, v. 3. 47.  
*Very's.* See vol. x. note to p. 166.  
*The Count de Stutli-Tracy.* See vol. xii. p. 323 and note.

### THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

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171. L. 'D' in the magazine and in Hazlitt's son's text. This speaker is, of course, Charles Lamb.  
 172. '*This one entire, etc.* *Otello*, v. 2. 145.  
*'Precious [immediate] jewel of the soul.'* *Ibid.*, III. 3. 15. 'Precious jewel' is *As You Like It*, II. 1. 14.  
*'Plain truth,' etc.* Cf. Pope, *Imitations of Horace, Epistles*, I. 6. 3.



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- 172 C. L. . . . W. H. 'C. D.' and 'W. B.' in the magazine and Hazlitt's son's text. 'I shall be ever,' etc. 'And that I may be never mistaken for U.' Concluding line of Garrick's epigram in reply to Dr. J. Hill's pamphlet, *Petition from the Letters I and U to David Garrick, Esq.* See Murphy's *Life of Garrick*, 1801, i. 283.  
 'No more of that,' etc. 1 *Henry IV.*, II. 4. 312.  
 175. 'Come, but no farther.' *Job*, xxxviii. 11.  
 177. *According to the poet.* Unidentified.  
 179. 'Come, let me clutch thee.' *Macbeth*, II. 1. 34.  
 180. 'Contradiction,' etc. Unidentified.  
*The future in the instant.* Unacknowledged from *Macbeth*, 1. 5. 59.  
 'And coming events,' etc. Campbell, *Loebel's Warning*.  
 182. 'Made and moulded of things past.' *Troilus and Cressida*, III. 3. 177.  
 M—. 'E.' in the magazine and in Hazlitt's son's text. Martin Burney, perhaps. Cf. 'Of Persons One Would Wish to have Seen' on 'On the Conversation of Authors.'  
 'Thou art to continue,' etc. Cf. *Measure for Measure*, II. 1. 200.  
 'Here and hereafter,' etc. Byron, *Sardanapalus*, Act IV. Sc. 1.  
*For the last forty years of your life.* Lamb was forty in 1815, in which year (or a year or two previously) we should perhaps imagine this dialogue to be taking place. It would, in that case, be the Lamb interior at 4 Inner Temple Lane which is represented. Cf. the notes to 'Of Persons One Would Wish to have Seen' and 'On the Conversation of Authors.' Hazlitt would be unlikely to depict himself as a member of the Burney-Ayrton-Lamb circle later than 1815. See Manwaring, *Burney*, 1931, p. 251, and the present editor's *Life*.  
 183. *Southey said at the time.* On reading, perhaps, the copy despatched by Lamb to Wordsworth on February 1, 1806, 'for Coleridge,' who was in Italy. See the present editor's *Life*, p. 94. Southey's contemporary opinion of Hazlitt's first book, apart from this reference, does not appear to be on record. Cf. 'A Reply to "Z."' (vol. ix. pp. 3-4).  
 J. L. 'J. D.' in the magazine and in Hazlitt's son's text. John Lamb, who was eleven-and-a-half years Charles' senior, and who died in 1821, aged fifty-six. The passage which he reads is from Hazlitt's *Essay on the Principles of Human Action* (vol. i. pp. 46-9).  
 186. 'This is the strangest tale,' etc., and following line. 1 *Henry IV.*, v. 4. 158-9.

### A STUFFED MAN

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings : First Series*. A fragment, pretty evidently, of a Northcote 'conversation.'

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187. *Not safe fifteen years ago.* A reference to the prosecution and imprisonment of Leigh and John Hunt in 1813 for the former's allusion to the Prince Regent in *The Examiner* as 'an Adonis of fifty.'

### MR. COBBETT AND THE QUAKERS

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings : First Series*.

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187. *He calls them blackguards.* See the *Political Register* of December 13, 1828: 'It is useless to talk, there never can be any good in England as long as this set of usurious blackguards be suffered, not only to be thus impudent with impunity,

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- but be caressed, cherished, favoured, and rewarded for that abominable insolence. . . . Make them conform to the law, like other men; take away their privilege of *affirming*; do not let the law acknowledge that they are more pure than other men, when they are notoriously less so; make them *swear*; take from them their false pretence in this respect, or let their persons and their property be without protection; compel them to shoulder the musket, like other men in their rank of life, or lay the *cat* upon their bare and fat shoulders, or chase them into prison as you do other disobedient persons summoned to perform military duty. . . . I would not be a Minister, or even a Member of Parliament, a month, before I would propose the adoption of these measures.'
187. '*Bare fat backs.*' Cf. Cobbett, just quoted.  
*One of them is hanged.* Hunton, a member of the Society of Friends, was hanged for forgery on December 8, 1828, after the failure of an influentially signed petition.
188. *Hates . . . Shakespeare and Milton.* Cf. *ante*, pp. 58-60.  
*Rural Economy.* Cobbett's *Cottage Economy* was published in 1821.  
'*Knowledge is at each common entrance,*' etc. *Paradise Lost*, III. 50.  
'*Stupidly good.*' *Ibid.*, IX. 465.  
'*Fat and pury.*' Cf. *Hamlet*, III. iv. 153.
189. '*L'Amphytrion où l'on dine.*' '*Le véritable Amphytrion est l'Amphytrion où l'on dine.*' Molière, *Amphytrion*, Act III. Sc. v.

### MR. JEFFREY AND MR. OWEN

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings: First Series*.

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189. *Tom Campbell.* Thomas Campbell (1777-1844), the poet, editor of the *New Monthly Magazine*.  
*Mr. Owen of Lanark.* Whose 'New Lanark experiment,' or model industrial village, had been visited by Hazlitt during his stay in Edinburgh in 1822.  
*Another critical essay.* Cf. vol. xvi. p. 216 and note, and vol. xix. p. 294. For Hazlitt's *Examiner* essay on Owen, which attracted considerable attention in 1816, see *Political Essays* (vol. VII. pp. 97 *et seq.*).
190. '*Nature smiled,*' etc. This story is given by Patmore as related by Hazlitt in May 1822, after his first intercourse with Jeffrey (*My Friends and Acquaintances*, III. 20-1).

### THE FIRST MEETING BETWEEN FOX AND GRATTAN

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings: First Series*.

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190. *Some time about the year 1780.* This meeting does not seem to have got into the biographies. Fox, in 1780, would be thirty-one.
191. '*Pitiless pelting of the storm.*' *Lear*, III. 4. 29.  
'*A night to cool a courtesan.*' *Ibid.*, III. 2. 79.  
*Mr. Grattan . . . said.* Hazlitt is recalling his conversation, no doubt, from a meeting at Godwin's, with whom Grattan, who died in 1820, was intimate.

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### THE LATE MURDERS

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings : First Series*.

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191. *This subject.* The trial of William Burke and Helen M'Dougal, at Edinburgh in December, 1828, for procuring subjects for medical dissection by murder. This improvement on the efforts of the 'resurrection men,' who contented themselves with snatching corpses from graveyards, sent a thrill throughout the country and caused the appointment of a Royal Commission. Here, the prime instigator of the scheme, turned King's evidence and escaped the gallows.
192. 'Thus far shalt thou come.' *Job*, xxxviii. 11.
193. 'Shots.' Medical corpses.
- 'Nelly, you are out of the scrape.' Burke's reported remark when the jury brought in a verdict of 'Not proven' against M'Dougal.
- 'No, not for Edinburgh!' Unidentified.
- 'A lower still opens to receive us.' Cf.

. . . a lower deep  
Still threatening to devour me opens wide.'

*Paradise Lost*, iv. 76-7.

194. *As Lord Bacon expresses it.* In his Essay, 'Of Revenge.'

### THE RULING PASSION

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings : First Series*.

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194. *Pictor loquitor.* That is, Northcote. Cf. 'A Stuffed Man,' above. The 'Conversations' proper were resumed in *The London Weekly Review* in March, and, on the demise of that journal in the following month, were transferred to *The Atlas*, where they ran to their close. See the introductory note to *Conversations of Northcote*, in vol. xi.
- Smith's book.* John Thomas Smith (1766-1833), author of *A Book for a Rainy Day*, whose *Nollekens and His Times* was published in 1828.
195. *My Life of Sir Joshua.* Northcote's *Memoirs* of Reynolds appeared in 1813.

### RICHESSSE DE LA LANGUE

Unsigned. First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

### POPE BENEDICT

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings : First Series*.

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197. *A Mrs. Millar.* Mrs., afterwards Lady (Anna) Miller, whose *Letters from Italy* were published in 1776 and enjoyed some reputation.
- An English duke bows, etc.* Cf. the *Plain Speaker* essay, 'On the Look of a Gentleman' (vol. xii. p. 219, footnote).
- The new farce.* *The Sublime and Beautiful*, with Madame Vestris, the famous dancer (1797-1856), was produced at Covent Garden in December, 1828.

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### BUTTS OF DIFFERENT SORTS

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings : First Series*.

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198. 'A swinish multitude.' *Reflections on the French Revolution* (ed. Payne, p. 93). *Scrub or the Captain*. In Farquhar's *Beaux Stratagem*.

### BURKE AND THE EDINBURGH PHRENOLOGISTS

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings : First Series*.

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200. 'Honourable murderers.' Cf. *Otello*, v. 2. 294.  
*Mr. Combe*. Dr. George Combe (1788-1858), of Edinburgh, who had met Hazlitt and estimated his bumps in 1822.  
*Credo quia impossibile est*. A phrase of Tertullian's.
201. *Animal-magnetist*. See vol. xii., note to p. 330.  
*A certain writer has said*. I have not identified this quotation.  
*Sterne's supposing*. In *Tristram Shandy*, Book III., chapter 20.  
*Io pæan!* Ovid., *Ars Amoris*, II. 1.
202. *Haggerty*. Haggart, presumably, executed for murdering his gaoler in Dumfries prison, after a career of frauds on women. Dr. Combe published a pamphlet of a complimentary nature, *Phrenological, Observations on the Cerebral Development of David Haggart* (1821). A Haggerty, it is true, was hanged in sensational circumstances in 1807, but this was before the benefits of phrenology were extended to criminals. Hazlitt no doubt confused the two names. Mackinnon I do not find.
203. Note. *This Mr. Joseph*. Samuel Joseph (d. 1850), sculptor, exhibited at the Royal Academy until 1823, when he temporarily removed to Edinburgh. His cousin, George Francis Joseph, A.R.A., executed a well-known water-colour portrait of Lamb.
204. *The Gall and Spurzheim doctrine*. See vol. xii., note to p. 17, and the *Plain Speaker* essay, 'On Dr. Spurzheim's Theory,' written in 1822.

### COMMON FAME

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings : First Series*.

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204. *A more generally accredited story*. Hazlitt had told it himself, on Northcote's authority, in the *Plain Speaker* conversation, 'On Envy' (vol. xii. p. 100).  
*Miss Hornecks*. Catherine, Goldsmith's 'Little Comedy,' and Mary, his 'Jessamy Bride.'  
*One of the parties*. Mary Horneck (Mrs. Gwyn). Her call on Northcote when Hazlitt was present (described in the *Conversations*) may have been the occasion of the correction. See vol. xi. p. 224 and note.  
*George Selwin*. George Augustus Selwyn (1719-91), wit and politician.
205. *Mr. Cambridge*. Richard Owen Cambridge (1717-1802). A memoir by his son was attached to the volume of his *Works* (1803).

## NOTES

### LORD NORTH

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings : First Series*.

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205. 'Husbed in the hollow mine of earth.' *Otello*, iv. 2. 78.  
206. *A son of Dunning's*. John Dunning (1731-83), first Lord Ashburton, Whig orator and statesman, for whom see Hazlitt's *Eloquence of the British Senate*.  
*Dr. Burney*. Classical critic (1757-1817), brother of the novelist and of Captain Burney.

### OLD CLOAKS

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings : First Series*.

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207. *Seems to have taken it into its head to ascend too*. A hit at Lord Eldon, the notoriously reactionary Lord Chancellor (see *The Spirit of the Age*), whose tenacious adherence to the Woolsack (1807-27) had come to an end with the appointment of Lord Lyndhurst in the ministry of Canning.  
208. *Miss Byfield*. Who made her first appearance at Covent Garden as Polly on January 12, 1829.  
'*A maid be vendible*.' *Merchant of Venice*, I. 1. 112.  
'*Laughter-loving Venus*.' Cf. Chapman, *Iliad*, III. 453-4.

### ODDS AND ENDS

Unsigned. Now first reprinted.

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208. *We would give fifty pounds . . . to see Mrs. Abington*. Cf. vol. v., note to p. 373, and vol. vi. p. 74.  
*Miss Farren, whom we just remember going off the stage*. Cf. vol. v., note to p. 291.

### POETRY

Unsigned. First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

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209. 'Daffodils,' etc. *A Winter's Tale*, iv. 4. 118 et seq.  
'*That fine madness*,' etc. Cf. Drayton, *Elegy*, *To Henry Reynolds, Esq.*  
211. 'Cowslips wan,' etc. *Lycidas*, 147.  
'*Lowly children*,' etc. Cf. 'With all the lowly children of the shade.' Thomson, *The Seasons*, Spring, 450.  
'*To elevate and surprize*.' The Duke of Buckingham, *The Rehearsal*, Act I. Sc. 1.  
*The sun . . . black*. Cf. 'The sunshine on the floor is black!' *The Cenci*, III. I. 14.

### ENGLISH GRAMMAR

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212. 'Foregone conclusion.' *Otello*, III. 3. 428.  
'*Mumpsimus . . . Sumpsimus*.' 'In allusion to the story (in R. Pace, *De Fructu*, 1527) of an illiterate English priest, who when corrected for reading "quod in ore mumpsimus" in the Mass, replied "I will not change my old mumpsimus for your new sumpsimus."' (*N.E.D.*)

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212. *The Diversions of Purley*. For which see Hazlitt's *New and Improved Grammar and Lectures on English Philosophy* in vol. II., and 'Horne Tooke' in *The Spirit of the Age* (vol. XI. pp. 54-57).  
 'A man of Ind.' Cf. 'Savages and men of Ind.' *The Tempest*, II. 2. 61.  
 213. 'Wise above what is written.' Cf. I *Corinthians*, iv. 6.  
 214. *A standard book*. Lindley Murray's *English Grammar*, the later editions of which were published by Longmans. See vol. II., note to p. 7.  
 215. 'Winged words.' *The Faerie Queene*, v. ii. 44.  
*Mr. Fearn*. Cf. vol. VIII. pp. 63-4. Fearn's *Anti-Tooke* was published in 1824.  
 'Still, small.' I *Kings*, xix. 12.

## MEMORABILIA OF MR. COLERIDGE

Unsigned. First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

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215. *Sheridan's Pizarro*. An adaptation of Kotzebue's *The Spaniard in Peru*, produced at Drury Lane, May 24, 1799.  
 216. *St. Thomas, on Ludgate-hill*. Cf. vol. IV. p. 149 and note.  
*A little soiled copy of Thomson's Seasons*. Cf. 'My First Acquaintance with Poets' (vol. XVII. p. 120).  
*Somewhere in Barrow*. Cf. the same essay (vol. XVII. p. 113), where Hume is said to have borrowed from South.  
 'Rewarded resolution.' Unidentified.  
 217. 'More was meant,' etc. Cf. II *Penseroso*, 120.  
*Giotto . . . Triumph of Death*. Cf. 'Mr. Coleridge' in *The Spirit of the Age* (vol. XI. p. 33 and note) and 'My First Acquaintance with Poets' (vol. XVII. p. 121, footnote).  
*Henderson, the actor*. John Henderson (1747-85), Garrick's rival.  
*Dr. Dodd*. William Dodd (1729-77), executed for forgery in 1777. His *Thoughts in Prison* appeared in the same year.  
 218. *The answer which Quevodo puts, etc.* See vol. IX., note to p. 35.

## COQUETS

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings: First Series*.

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219. 'From which she scatters,' etc. *The Faerie Queene*, III. xii. 13.  
 220. 'The fair, the chaste,' etc. *As You Like It*, III. 2. 10.

## MANNERS MAKE THE MAN

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings: First Series*.

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221. 'The perilous stuff,' etc. *Macbeth*, v. 3. 44.  
 'A consummation devoutly,' etc. *Hamlet*, III. 1. 63.  
*Poor Michael Angelo complained*. See Vasari, *Lives of the Painters* (Bohn, II. 485-6) and Cellini, *Autobiography* (ed. Cust. I. 40). Hazlitt seems to be summarising a remark of Cellini's, who met Torregiano on his return to Florence.

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222. *Pierce Egan*. Sporting writer (1772-1849).  
*Nysus or Euryalus*. *Æneid*, Book ix.  
*As Lord Castlereagh observed*. Cf. vol. xvii. p. 12 and note.  
*'Hope and the expectancy,' etc.* *Hamlet*, iii. 1. 161.  
 223. *'While yet the year,' etc.* Cf. Thomson, *The Seasons*, Spring, 18.  
*'Cribs and confines.'* *Macbeth*, iii. 4. 24.

### THE REVEREND EDWARD IRVING: AN HYPOTHESIS

Unsigned. Now first reprinted.

A paper occupying an isolated position in *The Examiner* in a year in which Hazlitt made it no other contribution. See, however, a laudatory article, 'Mr. Hazlitt: From a Correspondent who says he knows Mr. Hazlitt from his Writings only,' in the newspaper for July 26.

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223. *'Blind Orion,' etc.* Keats, *Endymion*, II. 198. Cf. vol. viii. p. 168.  
*'And at one sup,' etc.* Unidentified.  
 224. *Is it answered?* *The Merchant of Venice*, iv. 1. 43. Cf. vol. ix. p. 10.  
 225. *'Who is of purer eyes,' etc.* Cf. *Habakkuk*, 1. 13.

### PETER PINDAR

Unsigned. First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

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226. *This celebrated wit and character*. John Wolcot, 'Peter Pindar' (1738-1819), physician, satirist and poet. Hazlitt knew him in the Godwin circle, and concludes the *Lectures on the English Comic Writers* with a tribute (vol. vi. p. 168).  
*'Men made after supper,' etc.* 2 *Henry IV.*, iii. 2. 45.  
*'A manly man,' etc.* Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, Prologue, 167.  
*'The sweepings of his mind.'* Cf. vol. xv., note to p. 37.  
*'Halloo an anthem.'* Cf. 2 *Henry IV.*, 1. 2. 213.  
*The West Indies*. Wolcot accompanied his kinsman, Sir William Trelawny, to Jamaica on the latter's appointment as governor, 1767-73.  
*Viotti*. 'Giovanni Battista Viotti (1753-1824).'  
 227. *'Makingt be worse,' etc.* *Paradise Lost*, II. 113-14.

### LOGIC

Unsigned. First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

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229. *'That which is,' etc.* Cf. *Twelfth Night*, iv. 2. 16. 'Cophetua' for 'Gorboduc' in this quotation (here and elsewhere) is by confusion with *Love's Labour Lost*, iv. 1. 66, 2 *Henry IV.*, v. 3. 106, and *Romeo and Juliet*, II. 1. 14. *Somewhere in Westminster*. By the Utilitarians, of course. Cf. *ante*, pp. 255-60.  
*'Over shoes, over boots.'* Cf. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, I. 1. 24.

## NOTES

### THE LATE MR. CURRAN

Unsigned. First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

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230. *This celebrated wit and orator.* Whom Hazlitt met in the Godwin and Horne Tooke circles. See 'On the Conversation of Authors' (vol. xii. p. 41 and note). He is described in the *Memoirs* (1867, ii. 306) as dining with him, shortly before Curran's death in 1817.
231. *The late shots at Edinburgh.* See *ante*, p. 193.  
*Paradise Lost* . . . *Romeo and Juliet*. Cf. vol. ix. p. 41.  
*Mrs. Siddons*. Cf. vol. xviii. p. 408, footnote.

### THE WAVERLEY NOTES

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings: First Series*.

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232. *Petit Laxary*. In Paris. The theatre paid a visit to London in the winter of 1828.
233. *The Shakespeare forgeries*. William Henry Ireland's in 1795. His 'discovered' play, *Vortigern*, was produced at Drury Lane.

### THE COURT JOURNAL—A DIALOGUE

Unsigned. First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

A 'conversation' of Northcote, although out of the series of 'Conversations as Good as Real' appearing at this date in *The Atlas*, and with a change of the customary initials under which the conversations appeared in this newspaper. See *ante*, pp. 260-1, 272-7, and 295-6, and notes below.

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233. *M. . . . G.* Northcote and Hazlitt, respectively.  
*The Court Journal*. A weekly paper founded by Henry Colburn, May 2, 1829, in succession to *The London Weekly Review*, which it incorporated. The editor of the new journal was P. G. Patmore, for whose delectation, as well as that of Hazlitt's publisher, the 'conversation' may be supposed to have been written.  
*Some 'Maxims on Love.'* By Patmore, no doubt—a close but indifferent copy of Hazlitt's *Characteristics*. Cf. vol. xviii., note to p. 322.  
*Donald Bean Lean's Highland cave*. See *Waverley*, chap. 17.  
*Lord L— . . . Lord H—*. Lords Lansdowne and Holland, no doubt.  
*G—*. Godwin.
234. 'Our wistlers,' etc. *Hamlet*, III. 2. 253.  
'Married a bigbowman,' etc. *The Beggar's Opera*, Act 1. Sc. 1.  
*The story of Miss —*. Miss Milbanke. Cf. vol. xviii. p. 408, footnote.
235. *A very old friend of mine*. Hazlitt met Patmore in 1818. Cf. vol. ix., notes to pp. 8 and 116.  
*Does not Mr. C— know, etc.* Cf. vol. xviii. p. 412.  
*The K—*. George IV.  
*The Jockey Club*. Or, a Sketch of the Manners of the Age. By C. Piggott (1792).



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### THE LATE DR. PRIESTLEY

Unsigned. First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

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236. *This celebrated character.* Under whom, of course, Hazlitt was educated at Hackney. See H. W. Stephenson, *Hazlitt and Hackney College*, 1930, and the present editor's *Life*.  
'His body thought.' Cf. Donne, *An Anatomy of the World*, The Second Anniversary, 245-6.
237. *Controversy with Dr. Price.* Published in 1778.  
'The dazzling fence of argument,' etc. Cf. *Comus*, 791.
238. 'Antropophagi,' etc. *Otbello*, I. 3. 144.  
'Nay, an you mouth,' etc. Cf. *Hamlet*, v. 1. 306.  
*The transatlantic fugitive.* Priestley having to flee for his own safety in 1794 to America, where in 1804 he died.
239. *None but a Cobbett, etc.* See Cobbett's 'Observations on Priestley's Emigration' (*Selections*, I. 15, *et seq.*).

### THE PROSE ALBUM

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings: First Series*.

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239. 'Hunting the wind,' etc. See *ante*, note to p. 50.
240. *Telemachus, Eucharis.* Fénelon, *Télémaque*.  
*House of Pride.* *The Faerie Queene*, I. iv. 4.
241. *West.* Benjamin West (1738-1820), P.R.A. in succession to Reynolds, for whom see especially Hazlitt's uncollected art criticisms in vol. xviii.  
'Mighty landmark to the latter times.' Unidentified.
242. *A great wit and statesman.* See vol. xvii., note to p. 14.  
*Divina particula auræ.* Horace, *Satires*, II. 2.

### MR. JEFFREY'S RESIGNATION

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings: First Series*.

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243. *As we have already stated.* That is to say, the information had figured in the news columns of the journal. Jeffrey became Dean of Faculty in 1829, and Lord Advocate in the Grey ministry in the following year.  
'Little Frank Jeffrey.' A quotation from *Blackwood's Magazine*, *passim*.
244. *Craig-crook.* See vol. ix., note to p. 126.  
'The base politician.' Cf. 'This vile politician.' I *Henry IV.*, I. 3. 241. See *The Spirit of the Age* (vol. xi., note to p. 68).  
*The two knights described in Don Quixote.* Cf. vol. xvii. p. 24.
245. *Noble authors and parliamentary critics.* A number of whom are enumerated in Hazlitt's 'Damned Author's Address to His Reviewers' (*ante*, p. 392).  
*M——.* MacCulloch, no doubt. See as above.  
'A load to [would] sink a navy.' *Henry VIII.*, III. 2. 383.

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### AUTOGRAPHS

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings : First Series*.

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247. *Leigh Hunt's and Southey's are alike*. So Lamb said, in his 'Letter of Elia to Robert Southey' (*London Magazine*, October 1823). He afterwards retracted the opinion, telling Southey 'I do not think your handwriting at all like Hunt's' (*Letters*, ed. Lucas, 1912, II. 675).  
'*Led-captain*.' 'A hanger-on, dependant, parasite.' *N.E.D.*  
*A great moral lesson*. See vol. XIII., note to p. 213.

### ENGLISH CHARACTERISTICS

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings : First Series*.

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248. '*Internal oath*.' Unidentified.  
*Tom-and-Jerry*. Characters in Pierce Egan's *Life in London* (1821).

### PHRENOLOGICAL FALLACIES

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings : First Series*.

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248. '*It is the very error*,' etc. *Otello*, v. II. 109-11.  
'*This feeling disputation*.' 1 *Henry IV.*, III. 1. 206.  
249. '*Lie buried*.' *The Merchant of Venice*, III. 1. 6.  
*Mr. De Ville*. J. S. Deville, sculptor, who exhibited at the Royal Academy 1823-6.  
'*Knowledge at that entrance*,' etc. *Paradise Lost*, III. 50.  
250. '*Still to follow nature*,' etc. Cf. vol. XVIII. p. 341.  
*Twopenny Post Bag*. By Thomas Moore, published in 1812.  
251. Note. *Tall, opaque words*. See vol. VIII., note to p. 243.  
252. Mixed modes. Locke's expression. See vol. II. p. 185.

### THE CHAMPIONS OF PHRENOLOGY

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings : First Series*.

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255. *Sir William Hamilton*. Metaphysician (1788-1856), at this date much interested in phrenology, which he opposed.

### THE UTILITARIAN CONTROVERSY

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings : First Series*.

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256. '*Itself the great sublime it draws*.' Pope, *Essay on Criticism*, 680.  
'*A sweet tooth still in our heads*.' Cf. 'I am glad that my Adonis hath a sweet tooth in his head.' Lyly, *Euphues* (ed. Arber, 1868, p. 308).  
257. *Whole Duty of Man*. See vol. IV. note to p. 235.  
'*Coil and pudder o'er our heads*.' Cf. *Lear*, III. 11. 50 (Pope's text).

## NOTES

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258. *Mrs. Chatterley*. A minor actress (*née* Louisa Simeon), less remembered than her husband (d. 1822), for whom see *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v. p. 329). In 1830 she married Francis Place, after two years of what was on his side apparently a somewhat conspicuous courtship. See Graham Wallas, *Francis Place*, 1918 edn., p. 196. Hazlitt has another allusion to her alleged influence in Utilitarian circles, *ante*, p. 265.
- '*Who in herself*,' etc. See vol. x., note to p. 54.
- Mr. P*——. Thomas Love Peacock, presumably, who was one of the *Westminster* reviewers at this date, and is obviously pointed to three lines lower. His editors, Prof. Brett-Smith and Mr. C. E. Jones, have not been able to trace his praise of Mrs. Chatterley, after assiduous search in the *Globe* and elsewhere necessitated by this allusion. See Halliford edition of the *Works*, ix. Appendix i. Perhaps, however, it was to 'Mr. Place' that the lady seemed of Miltonic pre-eminence in her art, Hazlitt, in his fine careless way, making the transition to another P—— a few words later. Cf. the *Plain Speaker* dialogue, 'The New School of Reform' (vol. xii. p. 186).
- '*That might create a soul*,' etc. *Comus*, 560.
- His own Sir Ourang-Outang*. More properly, Sir Oran Haut-ton, in *Melincourt*.
- '*Can see nothing in him*.' Cf. 'The New School of Reform' vol. xii., note to p. 185.
- The editor of the Standard*. Founded as a Tory evening paper and rival to *The Courier* in 1827.
259. '*The greatest happiness to the greatest number*.' See vol. xii., note to p. 180.
- '*Millions were made for one*.' Cf. vol. xiii. p. x.
- Timeo Danaos*, etc. Virgil, *Aeneid*, ii. 49.
- One of the school . . . a Cornish youth*. Walter Coulson (1794?–1860), for whom see the present editor's *Life*.
- '*Drooped, faded, rotted*,' etc. Cf. the song, 'Virgins are like the Fair Flower,' *The Beggar's Opera*, Act i. Scene vii.
- Mrs. Tofts*. See vol. xix., note to p. 205.
260. *The true Amphytrion*, etc. See *ante*, note to p. 189.

## CONVERSATIONS AS GOOD AS REAL (1)

'No. viii' in the newspaper, unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings: First Series*. An omission from *Conversations of Northcote*, where it would have formed part of 'Conversation the Nineteenth' (vol. xi., and notes). The 'T.' and 'J.' in accordance with the practice of the newspaper, stand for Hazlitt and Northcote respectively.

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260. *Sir Thomas More*. Or, *Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society* (1829). His picture by Lawrence. In the Royal Academy, 1829.
- '*Light-bearded youth*,' etc. Cf. Coleridge, *Monody on the death of Chatterton*, versions of 1797 and 1803.
- I owe him obligations*. We do not get precisely this statement elsewhere.
261. '*The beat-oppressed brain*.' *Macbeth*, ii. i. 39.
- Mr. L*——. Lamb. His meeting with Northcote, referred to by the latter, does not appear to have been recorded.

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### THE EXCLUSIONISTS IN TASTE

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings : First Series*.

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262. *Fat friend. Comedy of Errors*. v. 1. 414. But Beau Brummell popularised this phrase by applying it to the Prince Regent.  
*His beautiful verses to Miss Lindley*. The 'grotto' verses, written to Miss Linley before their marriage.  
*'Being no poets.'* Unidentified.  
*Captain B——*. Captain Burney, presumably.
263. *L——*. Lamb, of course. Cf. 'Elia' in *The Spirit of the Age*.  
*Sir Walter's are trash*. Lamb does not appear to have expressed himself in public as frankly as this, but there seems to be no doubt that the Waverley Novels were among his 'imperfect sympathies.'

### SECTS AND PARTIES

Unsigned. First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

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264. Velocipede. Patented in England in 1818.  
*Mr. Bentham's Book of Fallacies*. Published in 1824.
265. *A board of Utility at Charing Cross*. Another Francis Place allusion, for whose 'Charing Cross Library,' or political workshop behind his shop at 16 Charing Cross, see Prof. Graham Wallas's *Life*. Hazlitt, as we shall learn again immediately, was finding the Utilitarian influence pervasive at this date.  
*A bigbly enlightened and liberal morning paper*. The *Morning Chronicle*, no doubt. See below, note to 293.  
*Mrs. Chatterley*. Cf. *ante*, p. 258 and note.
267. *'What they are least assured.'* Cf. *Measure for Measure*, II. 2. 119.

### HOGARTH AND FIELDING

Now first reprinted.

For the occasion of this correspondence see *Conversations of Northcote* (vol. XI. pp. 302-5). The introductory remarks are probably editorial.

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269. *'Though we be virtuous,' etc.* Cf. *Twelfth Night*, II. 3. 124.
270. *As Lord Grey said*. I have not identified this allusion.  
*'All in all.'* 1 *Corinthians*, xv. 28. Cf. Cowper, 'Manner is all in all,' etc.  
*'Table Talk,'* 542.  
*The Children in the Tower*. Cf. vol. XI. p. 196 and note.
271. *Which Mr. Cunningham attributes*. Cf. vol. XI. p. 303.  
*'Crownor's quest-law.'* *Hamlet*, v. 1. 24.  
*'A confusion of arguments.'* Unidentified.  
*Tyke*. See vol. XVIII. p. 279 and note.

### CONVERSATIONS AS GOOD AS REAL (2).

'No. XIV' in the newspaper, unsigned. First reprinted by Waller and Glover. An omission from *Conversations of Northcote*, where it would have followed after 'Conversation the Twentieth.' 'T.' is again Hazlitt, and 'J.' Northcote.

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272. *Duke's-Place*. See vol. vii., note to p. 25.  
*That old Mother W.* Northcote presumably refers to the procuress in *The Harlot's Progress* (Plate 1).  
*Fielding has tried, etc.* *Tom Jones*, Book iv. chap. ii.  
*Since you told me that remark of his.* See *Conversations of Northcote* (vol. xi. p. 296).  
 273. *Somewhere expressed*. By Hazlitt himself, in *The English Comic Writers* (vol. vii. p. 137).  
 275. *Madame Pesaroni*. I have not identified this performer.  
*The 'Possessed Boy.'* A fresco in the chapel of San Nilo, Grotta Ferrata. The drawing from this fresco was presumably by John Bryant Lane (1788-1868), who spent ten years in Rome (1817-27).  
*The late Edinburgh murders.* See *ante*, pp. 191 *et seq.*  
*The group at Ambrose's.* See Wilson's 'Noctes Ambrosianæ' in *Blackwood's*.  
 276. *The critic in the Atlas asks.* See *ante*, p. 268. The definition put in Northcote's mouth is, of course, pure Hazlitt. See his later paper, 'Originality' (*ante*, pp. 296 *et seq.*).  
*One of his tales.* Crabbe's tale 'The Confidant,' upon which Lamb founded *The Wife's Trial*; or, *the Intruding Widow*, published in *Blackwood's Magazine* for December, 1828.  
*Tam O'Shanter.* Statues of Tam O'Shanter and Souter Johnny, by Thomas, were exhibited in London in 1829.  
*Ducrow.* Andrew Ducrow (1793-1842), the equestrian performer.

## TRIFLES LIGHT AS AIR

Unsigned. First reprinted by W. C. Hazlitt in *The Round Table*, etc. (Bohn, 1871). Nos. i.-x. appeared in *The Atlas* on Sept. 27, 1829; Nos. xi.-xvii. on Oct. 4, 1829.

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278. *It was merely a fashion, etc.* See Byron's *Letter to \*\*\*\**, etc. (*Letters, etc.*, ed. Prothero, v. 553).  
 279. 'Procrastination,' etc. Young, *Night Thoughts*, i. 393.  
 281. 'Ears polite.' Pope, *Moral Essays*, iv. 150.  
*The Globe*. An evening paper (founded 1803) which absorbed *The Traveller* (vol. xvi. p. 229) in 1823, together with its editor, Walter Coulson, who, with Martin Burney, was a godfather of Hazlitt's son. Hence perhaps the compliment paid to a leading organ of Utilitarian opinion with which Hazlitt was not in sympathy.  
 282. 'Inconstant moon.' *Romeo and Juliet*, ii. 2. 109.  
*In what was formerly the narrow part of the Strand.* Prior to the improvements of 1828-9, with the removal of Exeter 'Change.  
 283. *A picture by Vandyke.* See the *Plain Speaker* essay (vol. xii. pp. 280 *et seq.*).  
 The following additional 'Trifle' (xviii.) is printed by Mr. W. C. Hazlitt, presumably from the manuscript: 'The French Revolutionists in the "Reign of Terror," with Robespierre at their head, made one grand mistake. They really thought that by getting rid of the patrons and abettors of the ancient régime they should put an end to the breed of tyrants and slaves; whereas in order to do this it would be necessary to put an end to the whole human race.'

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### COVENT GARDEN THEATRE

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings : First Series*.

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283. *This theatre will . . . open*. Litigation between the proprietors had got the affairs of Covent Garden into such a state that there was talk of the theatre closing altogether or becoming a circus. Hence this and the following paper. Happily, however, Fanny Kemble appeared at the opening of this season, and the crisis was averted. See 'The Free Admission' in vol. xvii., and the additional notes to that essay in the index volume.  
'For ever silent,' etc. Unidentified.
284. *Another O.P. row*. See vol. v., note to p. 357.
285. *An admired tragic actor*. Kean had been co-respondent in a divorce suit in 1825, from the consequences of which his career had not recovered.  
'Bony prizer.' *As You Like It*, II. 3. 8. Kean is intended.  
*The American house*. Stephen Price, an American, managed Drury Lane, 1826-30.
286. 'Sweep on,' etc. *As You Like It*, II. 1. 155.  
'At one fell swoop.' *Macbeth*, IV. 3. 219.  
'Submit to the soft collar,' etc. *Reflections on the French Revolution* (ed. Payne, p. 90).

### OUR NATIONAL THEATRES

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings : First Series*.

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288. *Proud and happy names*. Hazlitt's usual list, with one or two omissions. Cf. his *London Magazine* and *Examiner* papers in vol. xviii. pp. 271-7 and 392.  
'Dear as the ruddy drops,' etc. *Julius Cæsar*, II. 1. 289.  
*Mrs. D——*. Probably Mrs. Davenport is intended, for whom see *A View of the English Stage*. In this, her last season before retirement, she acted the Nurse to Fanny Kemble's Juliet.

### COMMON SENSE

Unsigned. First reprinted by Waller and Glover.

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289. 'Its price,' etc. Cf. *Job*, xxviii. 18.  
'Fairly worth the seven.' Pope, *Moral Essays*, IV. 44.  
'Comes home,' etc. Bacon, *Essays*, Dedication.  
*Grotius and Puffendorf*. Cf. vol. ix. p. 4, and elsewhere.  
*The statutes at large*. From Magna Carta to 1800, published under this title in 18 volumes, 1769-1800.  
*Doubled down in dog-ears*. Cf. vol. vii. p. 209 and note.
290. 'Fear no discipline of human wit [hands].' Cowper, *The Task*, II. 325.  
*A hungry tide-waster*. 'A customs officer who awaited the arrival of ships, and boarded them to prevent the evasion of the custom-house regulations.' N.E.D.  
*The conduct of Commodore Trunnion*. See *Peregrine Pickle*, Chap. viii.  
*A great but obscure metaphysician*. Sir Thomas Browne. Cf. *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, II. vi. 3.

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291. 'They have no figures,' etc. Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, II. I. 231.  
 'Crack of ploughs,' etc. 'The father cracks of horses, ploughs, and kye.' Burns,  
*Cotter's Saturday Night*, St. VIII.  
 292. *Pblegmatic C*——. Cobbett.  
*Vide meliora proboque*. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, VII. 20-1.

## A NEWSPAPER SKETCH

Unsigned. First reprinted in *New Writings: First Series*.

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293. *The editor of a very respectable morning newspaper*. John Black (1783-1855), who edited *The Morning Chronicle* from 1817 to 1843. For its eventual decline under his editorship see Fox Bourne, *English Newspapers*, II. 4 *et seq.* Black was much under the influence of the Utilitarians at this date, and hence, perhaps, a lack of sympathy which had developed since the appearance of Hazlitt's *Notes of a Journey* in his columns. Cf. the introductory note to 'The Damned Author's Address to His Reviewers' (*post*, p. 448). I do not find that *The Morning Chronicle* noticed *The Life of Napoleon* in any way, and its reference to Hazlitt's death is perfunctory.  
 'The impressiveness of a revelation.' Unidentified.  
 'The head is not sound,' etc. Unidentified.  
 294. 'Pleas'd to the last,' etc. Pope, *Essay on Man*, I. 83.

## CONVERSATIONS AS GOOD AS REAL (3)

'No. xvi' in the newspaper, unsigned. First reprinted by Waller and Glover. An omission from *Conversations of Northcote*, where it would have formed part of 'Conversation the Twenty-first.' The 'T.' as usual is Hazlitt, the 'J.' Northcote.

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295. G. Godwin.  
*The three last speakers of the House of Commons*. Charles Abbot, created Baron Colchester on his retirement, 1802-17; Henry Addington, created Viscount Sidmouth in 1805, 1789-1801; Arthur Onslow (1691-1768), Speaker in five parliaments, 1728-61.  
 296. *A classical education*. Cf. 'On Classical Education' in vol. IV.

## ORIGINALITY

'Specimens of a Dictionary of Definitions, No. 1,' unsigned. First reprinted by Hazlitt's son in *Criticisms on Art* (1843-4).

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297. *Multum abludit imago*. Horace, *Satires*, II. 3. 320.  
 298. 'Mistress' eyebrow.' *As You Like It*, II. 7. 149.  
 'Grace is in all her steps,' etc. *Paradise Lost*, VIII. 488-9.  
 'Wbate'er Lorrain light-touch'd,' etc. Thomson, *The Castle of Indolence*, I. 38-9.  
 299. *The well-known observation*. Cf. 'Why the Arts are not Progressive' (vol. XVII. p. 6).  
*Hoppner and Jackson*. Cf. vol. XII. p. 98 and vol. XI. p. 274.  
 'Gayest, happiest attitudes.' Akenside, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, I. 30.

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300. *Si Thomas's*. Lawrence's.  
*Nature puts them out*. Cf. vol. xii. p. 94 and note.  
 301. 'Semblable coherence.' 2 *King Henry IV.*, v. 1. 73.  
 'The great vulgar and the small.' Cowley, *Horace*, Odes, III. 1.  
 'The strong conception,' etc. *Otello*, v. 2. 55.

### THE IDEAL

'Specimens of a Dictionary of Definitions, No. II,' unsigned. First reprinted by Hazlitt's son in *Criticisms on Art* (1843-4), with MS. additions which are reproduced in the notes.

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302. l. 5 from bottom. After 'power without effort' the text of *Criticisms on Art* adds:  
 'It is the most exalted idea we can form of humanity. Some persons have hence raised it quite above humanity, and made its essence to consist specifically in the representation of gods and goddesses, just as if, on the same principle that there are court painters, there were certain artists who had the privilege of being admitted into the mythological heaven, and brought away casts and fac-similes of the mouth of Venus or the beard of Jupiter.'  
 302. 'The children of Homer' . . . 'the cloud-capt Olympus.' Unidentified.  
 303. l. 4. After 'in every part, beautiful' the text of *Criticisms on Art* adds:  
 'The Venus is only the idea of the most perfect female beauty, and the statue will be none the worse for bearing the more modern name of Musidora. The ideal is only making the best of what is natural and subject to the sense.'  
 'Severe in youthful beauty.' *Paradise Lost*, iv. 845.  
 'Inimitable on earth,' etc. *Ibid.*, III. 508.  
 l. 6 from bottom. After 'contradiction in terms,' the text of *Criticisms on Art* adds:  
 'Besides, it might be objected captiously that what is strictly common to all is necessarily to be found exemplified in each individual.'  
 304. 'Till our content is absolute.' Cf. 'My soul hath her content so absolute.' *Otello*, II. 1. 193.  
 'Strong patience conquers deep despair.' Unidentified.  
 'Know, virtue were not virtue,' etc.  
 'Nor should the change be mourned, even if the joys  
 Of sense were able to return as fast,' etc.  
Laodamia, 68-72.  
 305. The story of 'Patient Grizzle.' *The Clerke's Tale*.  
 306. . . . the human and the brute. Two paragraphs follow in the text of *Criticisms on Art* which do not appear in *The Atlas*:  
 'The ideal, then, is the highest point of purity and perfection to which we can carry the idea of any object or quality. The natural differs from the ideal style, inasmuch as what anything is differs from what we wish and can conceive it to be. Many people would substitute the phrase, from what it ought to be, to express the latter part of the alternative, and would explain what a thing ought to be by that which is best. But for myself, I do not understand, or at least it does not appear to me, a self-evident proposition, either what a thing ought to be, or what it is best that it should be; it is only shifting the difficulty a remove farther, and begging the question a second time. I may know what is good; I can tell what is better: but that which is best is beyond



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me—it is a thing in the clouds. There is perhaps also a species of cant—the making up for a want of clearness of ideas by insinuating a pleasing moral inference—in the words purity and perfection used above; but I would be understood as meaning by purity nothing more than a freedom from alloy or any incongruous mixture in a given quality or character of an object, and by perfection completeness, or the extending that quality to all the parts and circumstances of an object, so that it shall be as nearly as possible of a piece. The imagination does not ordinarily bestow any pains on that which is mean and indifferent in itself, but having conceived an interest in any thing, and the passions being once excited, we endeavour to give them food and scope by making that which is beautiful still more beautiful, that which is striking still more grand, that which is hateful still more deformed, through the positive, comparative, and superlative degrees, till the mind can go no farther in this progression of fancy and passion without losing the original idea, or quitting its hold of nature, which is the ground on which it still rests with fluttering pinions. The ideal does not transform any object into something else, or neutralize its character, but, by removing what is irrelevant and supplying what was defective, makes it more itself than it was before. I have included above the Fauns and Satyrs, as well as the Heroes and Deities of antique art, or the perfection of deformity as well as of beauty and strength, but any one who pleases may draw the line, and leave out the exceptionable part; it will make no difference in the principle.

'Venus is painted fair, with golden locks, but she must not be fair beyond the fairness of woman;—for the beauty we desire is that of woman—nor must the hair be actually of the colour of gold, but only approaching to it, for then it would no longer look like hair, but like something else, and in striving to enhance the effect we should weaken it. Habit, as well as passion, knowledge as well as desire, is one part of the human mind; nor, in aiming at imaginary perfection, are we to confound the understood boundaries and distinct classes of things, or "to o'erstep the modesty of nature." We may rise the superstructure of fancy as high as we please; the basis is custom. We talk in words of an ivory skin, of golden tresses; but these are but figures of speech, and a poetical licence. Richardson acknowledges that Clarissa's neck was not so white as the lace on it, whatever the poets might say if they had been called upon to describe it.'

### THE SPIRIT OF CONTROVERSY

'Specimens of a Dictionary of Definitions, No. III,' unsigned. First reprinted by Hazlitt's son in *Table-Talk* (1845).

#### PAGE

306. 'Envy, malice,' etc. 'From envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness.' *The Litany*.
308. *David Deans's*. 'Of a surety I would deem it my duty to gang to the root o' the matter.' *The Heart of Midlothian*, chap. 43.
- 'Their hearts burn within them,' etc. Cf. *S. Luke*, xxiv. 32.
- 'A coil and pudder.' See *ante*, notes to pp. 136, 257.
- 'To leave the part of Hamlet,' etc. The original of this phrase does not seem to be readily identifiable. Scott, in his 1832 introduction to *The Talisman*, alludes to 'the playbill which is said to have announced the tragedy of Hamlet, the character of the Prince of Denmark being left out.'

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309. *Mr. Taylor's discourses.* Robert Taylor (1784-1844), the notorious deistical clergyman, who, early in 1828, had been sentenced to a year's imprisonment for a blasphemous discourse.  
*The Duke of Newcastle.* The fourth Duke (1785-1851), a violent opponent of Catholic Emancipation passed by Wellington's ministry in 1829.  
 'Strange,' etc. Byrom, *On the Feuds between Handel and Bononcini*.  
 'Like a thick scurf,' etc. See ante, note to p. 82.  
 'Whose edge,' etc. *Cymbeline*, III. 4. 36.  
*Malibran.* Marie Félicité Malibran, née Garcia (1808-36), operatic singer, who first appeared as understudy to Mme. Pasta at Covent Garden in June 1825, and enjoyed a great success. After a tour in America, where she married a French banker, she created a fresh *furor* in Paris and Italy in 1828-9. Her premature death occurred at Manchester, during an English tour following partial retirement and a second marriage.
310. 'Of whatsoe'er descent,' etc. Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, I. 100-3.

### ENVY

'Specimens of a Dictionary of Definitions, No. IV,' unsigned. First reprinted by Hazlitt's son in *Sketches and Essays* (1839). Cf. the *Plain Speaker* dialogue of the same title (vol. XII. pp. 97 et seq.).

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312. 'Jealous leer malign.' *Paradise Lost*, IV. 503.  
 313. 'Phœnix gazed by all.' *Ibid.*, V. 272.  
 314. 'Though wondering senates,' etc. Pope, *Moral Essays*, I. 184-7.  
 315. 'Like to a gate,' etc. Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, III. 3. 121.  
 I. 15. Leigh Hunt, in his copy of *Sketches and Essays* in the Forster Collection at South Kensington, emends this sentence to read: 'We trust the testimony of ages, it is true; for we are no longer in pain,' etc. He does so, of course, erroneously.
316. 'The learned pate,' etc. *Timon of Athens*, IV. 3. 17.

### PREJUDICE

'An Analysis of Prejudice' and 'Further Thoughts on Prejudice,' both unsigned. First reprinted by Hazlitt's son (together with the later paper, 'Paragraphs on Prejudice') under the collective title 'On Prejudice' in *Sketches and Essays* (1839). I have assumed the two *Atlas* papers to have been intended by Hazlitt for a continuation of his series, 'Specimens of a Dictionary of Definitions.'

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317. *Introverted.* Cf. vol. XII. p. 283.  
 'God's image,' etc. Fuller, *The Holy State*, II. 20, 'The Good Sea-Captain.'  
*Mr. Murray no longer libels men of colour.* I have not identified this allusion, which is probably to *The Quarterly Review*.  
 318. 'That one entire,' etc. Cf. *Othello*, V. 2.  
 319. *The most dangerous enemies,* etc. The second article in the newspaper begins at this point.  
 320. 'Most ignorant,' etc. Cf. *Measure for Measure*, II. 2. 119.  
*Mr. Burke says. Reflections on the French Revolution* (ed. Payne, p. 102).  
*When our side of the shield,* etc. Cf. ante, p. 244.  
 'Rings the earth [world] with the vain stir.' Cowper, *The Task*, III. 129-30.  
 321. 'Murder to dissect.' Wordsworth, 'The Tables Turned,' 28.

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### PARTY SPIRIT

Unsigned. First reprinted by Hazlitt's son in *Winterslow* (1850).

Probably intended by Hazlitt as a continuation of the series, 'Specimens of a Dictionary of Definitions,' this is his last contribution to *The Atlas*, and, with the exception of the essays 'The Free Admission' and 'The Sick Chamber' (vol. xvii.), written in intervals of his illness, his last contribution to the contemporary press.

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321. 'The salt of the earth.' S. Matthew, v. 13.

322. 'Cuts the common link,' etc.

'To cut the link of brotherhood, by which  
One common Maker bound me to the kind.'

Cowper, *The Task*, III. 208-9.

323. *A Jordanus Bruno*. Giordano Bruno (1548?-1600), burnt for heresy by the Inquisition.

*The sentiment of the pious English bishop*. Cf. vol. xvii. p. 43 and note.

### PARAGRAPHS ON PREJUDICE

*The Monthly Magazine*, October 1830, 'by the late William Hazlitt.' First reprinted by his son (see introductory note to 'Prejudice' above) in *Sketches and Essays* (1839).

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324. 'Reason for the faith,' etc. Cf. 1 Peter, iii. 15.

325. Note. Berkeley . . . attacks Dr. Halley. See the Seventh Dialogue; and, for the connection of Edmund Halley (1656-1742), astronomer royal, with the passage, see Spence's *Anecdotes*, ed. Singer, 1820, p. 140.

326. *It has been well said*. Cf. vol. viii. (*English Comic Writers*), p. 124 and note.

327. 'More than natural.' Hamlet, II. 2. 385.

328. 'Thus shall we try,' etc. Cf. 1 John, iv. 1.

*Of their own heads*. See vol. ix., note to p. 67.

'Comes home to the business,' etc. Bacon, *Essays*, Dedication.

'Still, small voice.' 1 Kings, xix. 12.

329. *Mr. Hobbes used to say*. 'He was wont to say, that if he had read as much as other men, he should have continued still as ignorant as other men.' *Lives of Eminent Men by John Aubrey, Esq., now first published from the originals in the Bodleian Library and Ashmolean Museum*, 1813, II. 621.

### APHORISMS ON MAN

*The Monthly Magazine*, October 1830-June 1831, 'by the late William Hazlitt.' First reprinted by Waller and Glover. In the magazine they appeared as follows: I.-XI. October 1830; XII.-XXXVI. November 1830; XXXVII.-XLVII. December 1830; XLVIII.-LV. April 1831; LVI.-LXVI. May 1831; LXVII.-LXX. June 1831.

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331. *Monmouth-street*. See vol. xi., note to p. 313.

'In the deep bosom,' etc. Richard III., I. I. 4.

332. 'At one fell swoop.' Macbeth, IV. 3. 219.

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334. 'An ultimate end.' 'An utmost end.' The passage is quoted *ante*, p. 49. O'Connell, having carried his cause. Daniel O'Connell (1775-1847), the protagonist of Catholic emancipation, was elected to Parliament for County Clare in July 1828, but his claim to take his seat in the new session was rejected on the ground that the Relief Act (April 1829) was not retrospective. He appeared at the bar of the House on May 15, and was returned unopposed for Clare in July, between which dates Hazlitt's comment was presumably written.
- Erasmus, in his 'Remains.' I have not identified this allusion.
335. 'For cause.' Cf. *Othello*, III. 4. 159.
- 'The soft collar,' etc. Burke, *Reflections on the French Revolution* (ed. Payne, p. 90).
- 'The iron rod,' etc. Cf.
- 'When the scourge inexorably, and the torturing hour,  
Calls us to penance.'
- Paradise Lost*, II. 90-2.
- \* Lord Castlereagh was wrong. Cf. *ante*, p. 222 and note.
- The National Gallery in Pall-Mall. See vol. x., note to p. 7. The collection was shown to the public at 100 Pall Mall, transferred to 105 Pall Mall in 1834, and finally moved to the present Gallery in 1838.
337. An editor. Cf. vol. xvii. p. 359.
- De non apparentibus*, etc. Cf. vol. vi. p. 340, etc.
338. In the ruins of Drury-lane. After the fire which destroyed the theatre in 1809, presumably.
- Buonaparte used to speak. Cf. *The Life of Napoleon*.
- 'There goes my wicked self.' Cf. *ante*, p. 323, and vol. xvii. p. 43 and note.
- 'To be honest,' etc. *Hamlet*, II. 2. 176.
339. L——. ? Lamb.
340. 'Leave others poor indeed.' Cf. *Othello*, III. 3. 161.
- 'To be direct,' etc. *Othello*, III. 3. 378.
- 'Tout homme reflechi,' etc. Cf. vol. iv., note to p. 117.
341. A popular author. Scott, no doubt.
- 'Come, let me clutch thee.' *Macbeth*, II. 1. 34.
342. 'Writes himself,' etc. Cf. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, I. 1. 9.
343. 'To triumph,' etc. Gray, *The Bard*, 142.
344. A certain bookseller. Sir Richard Phillips. See *Conversations of Northcote* (vol. xi. p. 272).
- 'Fancies and good-nights.' 2 *Henry IV.*, III. 2. 346.
345. 'From every work,' etc. *The Faerie Queene*, I. 4. 20.
346. 'Meted, tbawed,' etc. Cf. *Hamlet*, I. 2. 129.
- 'The coronet face.' See his allusion to Mrs. Basil Montagu in 'On the Conversation of Authors' (vol. xii. p. 42).
- Beau Didapper. See *Joseph Andrews*, Book iv. chap. 9.
348. Teniers's monkeys. Cf. *Characteristics* (vol. ix. p. 296).
- 'Damned spot.' *Macbeth*, v. 1. 35.
- San Benitos. 'Under the Spanish Inquisition, a penitential garment of yellow cloth . . . worn by a confessed and penitent heretic.' *N.E.D.*
349. The Chimney-sweeper on May-day. See vol. x., note to p. 213.
- 'The web of our lives,' etc. *All's Well that Ends Well*, IV. 3. 83.
- The Devil's Elixir, etc. *The Devil's Elixir, or the Shadowless Man*, a musical romance by Edward Fitzball (1792-1873), produced at Covent Garden,

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- April 20, 1829; *The Bottle Imp*, a melodrama by Richard Brinsley Peake (1792-1847), produced at the Lyceum, July 7, 1828, and at Covent Garden, Oct. 17, 1828.
349. *Mr. Farley*. Charles Farley (1771-1859), the actor, to whose skill as a theatrical machinist at Covent Garden Hazlitt here refers.
350. *Mr. L——*. . . *Sir Thomas ——*. Unidentified.  
 'Man is in no haste to be venerable.' Cf. vol. xvii. p. 272.  
 'La Belle Assemblée's dresses for May.' Cf. 'In the manner of—Ackerman's dresses for May' (Moore, *Horace*, xi. ii.), quoted elsewhere by Hazlitt.  
*M. Stultz*. M. Stulz, the well-known tailor, referred to by Bulwer in *Pelham* and (more than once) by Thackeray.

### HINTS TO PERSONS IN BUSINESS

I have not traced any contemporary newspaper or magazine appearance of this characteristic trifle, which is now first printed from the original manuscript in the possession of Mr. A. C. Goodyear.

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351. 'And tradesmen born,' etc. See vol. xii., note to p. 203.

### DEFINITION OF WIT

First printed by Hazlitt's son in *Literary Remains* (1836), from which it is here reprinted.

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352. 'Wherein the most distant resemblance,' etc. Hazlitt is quoting from memory Locke's definition of wit, which he gives at length in the lecture 'On Wit and Humour' in the *English Comic Writers*. See vol. vi. pp. 18-19.
353. 'The squandering glances,' etc. *As You Like It*, ii. 7. 57.  
 King Ferdinand into Thing Ferdinand. In Leigh Hunt's copy of *Literary Remains*, in the possession of the editor, there is a marginal note against this passage in his hand: 'I beg leave to say (and to be proud of saying, seeing it thus spoken of by such a man) that the joke was mine.'  
 'Revive the ancient spirit of loyalty,' etc. Quoted elsewhere from Scott. Cf. vol. xi. p. 65.
354. 'Sounds significant.' See *ante*, note to p. 163.
355. *Compagnons du lys*. Cf. vol. xv. p. 230.
356. 'Foregone conclusion.' *Otello*, iii. 3. 428.  
 'Skin and slur over.' Cf. *Hamlet*, iii. 4. 147.
357. 'In cut and die,' etc. *Hudibras*, i. 1. 243-4.  
 'The bouse,' etc. Swift, *Vanbrugh's House*, from memory.  
 'Turned from black to red.' *Hudibras*, ii. 11. 32.  
*In a pantomime at Sadler's Wells, some years ago*. Cf. vol. xii. p. 240 and vol. xix. p. 118.  
 'Like jewels,' etc. Collins, Ode, *The Manners*, 55.
358. *Mark Supple's calling out from the Gallery*. The incident will be found narrated in 'Memoranda of Men and Things' in *The Atlas* for March 8, 1829. Mark Supple, an Irishman, was a predecessor of Hazlitt's in the Press Gallery for *The Morning Chronicle*, and a colleague of Peter Finnerty's (vol. xvii. p. 300).  
 'Pray lend me,' etc. Farquhar, *The Beaux Stratagem*, Act v. Scene 4.
59. Mixed modes. See *ante*, note to p. 259.
361. 'A forked radish,' etc. 2 *Henry IV.*, iii. 2. 334.

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### BELIEF, WHETHER VOLUNTARY?

First printed by Hazlitt's son in *Literary Remains* (1836), from which it is here reprinted. Also printed in *Winterslow* (1850).

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363. 'Thy wish,' etc. 2 *Henry IV.*, iv. 5. 93.  
 364. Note. Cf. vol. xvii. p. 309.  
 365. 'Blown about,' etc. Cf. *Ephesians*, iv. 14.  
 'Infinite agitation of wit.' Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, Book 1. iv. 5.  
 366. Sir Isaac Newton, etc. Newton published *Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John* (1733), and Napier of Merchiston *A Plain Discovery of the whole Revelation of St. John* (1594).  
 'Masterless passion,' etc. *The Merchant of Venice*, iv. 1. 51 (Pope's text).  
 367. 'Fear has [One sees],' etc. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, v. 1. 9.  
*The story of January and May.* See Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, 'The Merchant's Tale.'  
 368. *A good remark in 'Vivian Grey.'* See Book iv. chap. v.

### THE SPIRIT OF PHILOSOPHY

First printed in S. C. Hall's annual, *The Amulet*, for 1836 (also issued with title-page undated), 'by William Hazlitt.' Now first reprinted.

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371. 'If reasons were as plenty,' etc., and following quotation. 1 *Henry IV.*, ii. 4. 268-70.  
 372. 'With healing on its [in his] wings.' *Malachi*, iv. 2.  
 'Hopeth all things,' etc. Cf. 1 *Corinthians*, xiii. 7.  
 373. To 'constrain' the truth. Cf. vol. x. note to p. 17.  
 374. 'The eye,' etc. Wordsworth, 'The Tables Turned.'  
 375. 'A calculation of consequences.' Cf. vol. xii. p. 192.  
*Madmen, they say, reason.* Cf. vol. xi. p. 12 and note.  
 'Tall, opaque words.' Cf. ante, p. 251 and note.  
 'Vaulting ambition,' etc. *Macbeth*, i. 7. 27.

### OUTLINES OF MORALS

Regarding this paper (first printed by Mr. A. C. Goodyear in *The London Mercury* for June 1926), see the introductory note to 'Outlines of Political Economy' in vol. xix. It was evidently abandoned at an early stage of composition, no doubt in favour of the dialogue 'Self-Love and Benevolence' (ante, pp. 162 et seq.). Another MS. in rough draft, 'Outlines of the Human Mind,' the text of which has presented even greater difficulties, is given below.

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376. *The doctrine of selfishness.* In the MS., Hazlitt's heading 'II. Outlines of Morals' is crossed out, and 'On the Doctrine of Selfishness' is substituted in the handwriting of his son, whose efforts to prepare the text for publication are in evidence throughout.  
 377. 'Oh! who can hold,' etc. *Richard II.*, i. 3. 295-8.  
 379. 'Self love and social are the same.' Pope, *Essay on Man*, iv. 396.

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380. 'Coming events,' etc. Campbell, 'Lochiel's Warning.'  
 381. 'Appliances and means to boot,' 2 *Henry IV.*, III. 1. 29.  
 382. *This is candid and plausible enough*, etc. The MS. is clearly written here, but, as throughout, has not been looked over by Hazlitt, who would have supplied some evident omission.  
 383. *Non ignara mali*, etc. Virgil, *Æneid*, 1. 630.  
 384. *But, lastly*, etc. This passage is considerably crossed out and over-written by Hazlitt's son, so that transcription of the original is difficult.  
 385. *Nature in constructing*, etc. Cf. *An Essay on the Principles of Human Action* (vol. 1. p. 40, footnote).  
 386. *In that of any one else*. As in 'Outlines of Political Economy,' a new paragraph is begun in the MS., but is crossed through, probably by Hazlitt's son.

### [OUTLINES OF THE HUMAN MIND]

Now first printed from the manuscript in the possession of Mr. A. C. Goodyear.

Cf. this paper with the third and fourth letters on 'Mme. De Staël's Account of German Philosophy' (*ante*, pp. 22-36), and with 'Mr. Locke a Great Plagiarist' (*ante*, pp. 69 *et seq.*).

The MS. is headed by Hazlitt 'III. Outlines of the Human Mind,' and begins :

'It is singular though not unaccountable that Mr. Locke who only borrowed a part of the modern system of metaphysics from Hobbes has had all the credit of it, while Hobbes the real inventor of it has had all the obloquy, and his name, instead of being treated with respect, carries a kind of stigma with it. Such is the force of popular prejudice, ratified by the supposed candour of posterity. The fact is that the author of the *Leviathan* not only laid down the corner-stone and fundamental principle of that philosophy, but built all the consequences on it that have ever since been deduced from it, and thus by presenting too broad and formidable a front to established opinions shocked and raised a universal outcry against him as a sacrilegious innovator; whereas Locke, with more caution and confusion of mind adopting only the first principles (that there are no innate ideas) and either rejecting, explaining away, and [?] or] doubtfully admitting the inferences which Hobbes boldly and somewhat rudely drew from it, gained more proselytes to his doctrine as an original and candid reasoner, and all that succeeding writers have done in the last hundred and fifty years has been to elicit from the embryo and imperfect discovery of Locke the entire and full-grown consequences which are to be found dogmatically stated in Hobbes's work, of whose name even some of these writers scarcely appear to have so much as heard. I think these conclusions, with the assumption on which they are founded, may be summed up under ten heads, and will be found by those who chuse to make the inquiry in the first eighty pages of the *Leviathan*, and in the tract on Philosophical Necessity. They are as follows. 1. That all our ideas are derived from the senses. 2. That there are no complex ideas. 3. That there are no abstract ideas. 4. That all reasoning, &c., consists in words. 5. That the only medium of connection between our ideas is association. 6. That the mind is material. 7. That all actions are necessary. 8. That the only motive to action is pleasure or pain. 9. That our affections are modifications of self-love. 10. That there is no original distinction of genius, character, &c., but that all such differences arise from education, habit, and circumstances, acting upon the original and sole distinctive faculty to receive external impressions. Perhaps to these might be added as a farther corollary Hume's argument that the mind has no idea of cause or power, the only modern discovery not explicitly laid down by Hobbes.—It is my intention to examine some of these propositions, to none of which except the first and seventh, that we have no innate

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ideas and that all our actions are dependent on previous motives, can I lend a hearty or implicit assent, so as to shew the necessity for a new theory of the nature of thought and the intellectual faculties in general.

'I. First, I wish to ask what an *idea* is, and in so doing to demonstrate that all our ideas are unavoidably complex, instead of being simple. On this question, Mr. Locke (as usual) halts between two opinions: Mr. Hobbes says all the complexity is in the term, Mr. Horne Tooke declares it is "as absurd to talk of a complex idea as of a complex star," and all the French philosophers (downwards from Condillac, who is said to have created the science of *ideology* a hundred years after it was created to his hands; but as the French think nothing of any thing till it is theirs, of course the first borrowing of a thing from others is a French creation of it), all the French philosophers, I say, agree that it is impossible to compare any two ideas together or to attend to more than one object at a time. Now to go at once *in medias res*, I would argue that if according to this assumption it is impossible to have the idea of two objects at once, it is equally impossible ever to have the idea of any object whatever, for there is no object however gross or inconsiderable that does not consist of a number of parts which must all be contemplated at once or under one single point of view in order to form a conception of that object. It appears to me, I confess, that this argument is decisive and unanswerable. What would pass for an elementary and profound philosophy will be found thus sifted to reduce itself to the most verbal commonplace. Thus it may be said upon the principle just stated that it is impossible to have the idea of two mahogany tables at once, so as to compare them simultaneously, and that I only pass rapidly from the one to the other; but by the same rule it is evidently impossible for me to have the idea of one of these tables in my mind, for does not this idea consist of a number of parts and propositions, as for instance, of the number and equality of the sides if it is square, of its circular form if round, of its size whether little or big, of its colour, the wood that it is made of, as that it is a mahogany table, &c.? It is clear we must have a number of these considerations present to the mind or we could have no idea of the table we are speaking of or looking at, not merely in relation to other tables, but as a piece of furniture distinct in itself or answering to a particular name. We are deceived in this half-witted sophism by the nature of language to suppose that because a given object has one name, it is therefore one thing, and can be reasoned upon as a strict and solid metaphysical atom; but in so doing we construct not a system of truths but a set of conundrums, for there is no such thing as a single object in nature, nor any idea answering to such a simple undivided essence in the human mind. It may be said that I have taken a large and unwieldy instance, for that the table itself consists of several parts which may be and in truth are contemplated in succession, as the legs, the flaps, the grain of the wood, &c.; but I answer that there is no object whatever, the most minute and simple, but is the object of thought or of the senses, as a leaf, a grain of sand, a pin's head, and so on, that does not necessarily and strictly consist of a number of parts or different sensible impressions which must be combined together in our reflection or consciousness to have the idea denoted by the name, and that this argument holds good unless it could be maintained that some of these original ideas are single atoms, which would leave us in possession of no ideas at all (whether complex or simple), for it is certain we have not any idea of any such at one impression, and that in the formation of our conception we do not proceed from nothing to that which is but one step removed from nothing (the least possible existent) but jump at aggregates. It may be hard to prove that we have even two ideas together, for there is a subterfuge in replying we pass rapidly from one to the other, but it is harder still to common sense to admit that we never have any ideas at all, the inevitable consequence of allowing that we never have any two together, for they all (the most simple possible) consist of more than one. The experiment of the burnt end of a stick



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turned round which gives the idea of a circle of fire has been suggested as an instance of a rapid succession of sensations producing the idea of unity of impression; but this example shews just the contrary, for it is the circumstance of these successive impressions being present to the eye or mind all at once (or being renewed before the former have ceased) that produces this effect. If the mind had no power to contemplate the whole circumference described at once, it could never form the idea of a circle. Each scintillation of light would be extinguished as soon as perceived, and the mind would never trace the least consciousness of more than the actual impression made upon it. To have the notion of a curve or of any other line or form it is surely necessary to bear a number of these in mind at one and the same time. If I ever therefore have the idea of an aggregate object (and all objects of thought, of sense, or language, even the simplest, are aggregates, unless we could descend to infinite divisibility, which is impossible), I must in so doing comprehend a number of particulars at once with their relation to each other, and in addition to the sum or the relics of individual impressions, the understanding or power of perceiving the relations of these to each other, and of combining them into a whole, is necessary in order to evolve the idea of the meanest object in nature, a leaf, a stone, a blade of grass or a grain of dust. Each of these has a certain configuration, texture, &c., and the mere successive juncture of the sensible or individual impressions of these without some faculty to unite and compare them would no more give the idea of any of the objects in question (which however certainly exists in the mind or we could never even talk about it) than a set of animalculæ tumbling about in a rotten cheese would tell the number, extent and occupation of the whole tribe together; or than seeing the dots in a mezzotint or engraving without combining the whole or parts together would enable us to judge of the perfection and beauty of the general design. The *idea* of any thing is therefore strictly an impossibility and contradiction, if each part of that thing is forgotten and out of sight before any other appears, which must be the case if there is no faculty in the mind to comprehend two several impressions at once, whatever be the rapidity with which it may be supposed to glance from one to the other; for this rapidity can only produce the effect in question by assisting the memory and bringing the materials of [word illegible] together before the traces of each are lost, and can be of no avail if one absolutely excludes another, whether the interval between be long or short, the thousandth part of a second, or twenty years. It matters not how fast the impressions succeed, if one disappears as soon as the other appears, for they can thus never coexist or appear in the presence of the same superintending and conscious intelligence. Something of this sort seems to have at one time struck Mr. Locke, for he says in speaking of Power as a simple idea, that to be sure it implies a sense of relation and consequent complexity, which indeed all simple ideas do, but he only [word illegible] near the truth, to use an expression of Mr. Tooke's, and never pursued the subject any farther, it being the principle of his mind rather to turn back on his reasoning and distrust any new light than to follow any that might mislead him. There can be no more comparison between two different objects without the same conscious faculty than two different persons twenty miles apart can compare the same objects and say which is the largest, neither of them being seen by the other. Thus then I say that to compare two tables I must have the idea of both in my mind at once: if this is denied to be possible, then by the same rule I cannot have the idea of one of them, for that consists of four sides at least, and arguing on, I cannot ever have the idea of the four sides of the table nor even of one, but must reduce the outline to individual impressions or sensible points, and even this is too much, for a sensible point is only the smallest aggregate I can conceive of, and I shall have no more idea of form than the blind man of colours, or twenty different persons, hearing as many different instruments, will have of a concert.—Q.E.D. Suppose particle A receives the impression *a*, and particle B the

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impression *b*, *quere*, is it possible that A, which has no knowledge or consciousness of the existence of *b*, can make a comparison between that and *a*? Ridiculous! It is said by Mr. G. that the comparison takes place in the imperceptible interval between the two, that is, when there is an idea of neither. *Quam nihil ad tuum, Papiane, ingenium!*

'II. I am then so far from allowing that there are none but sensible or individual impressions in the mind that I am disposed to maintain that there are none but complex and general ones. The last inference is a consequence from the first. For it has been shewn that every particular object (even of sense) is an aggregate composed of many parts, and those parts strictly again of others, and so on without end, and therefore all that the mind can do in any case is to form a general or abstract idea of the effect of all these together, since to have a perfect idea of each it must descend into infinite detail, which is impossible. Every object (without exception) being a complex impression requires comprehension of mind to take it in, and being composed of infinite parts, requires the faculty of abstraction to form an imperfect complex idea of it, the utmost that a finite intelligence can do. For instance, take the idea of a face. This is, according to the vulgar notion and to modern philosophy, one object, a plain, positive thing, which the senses are quite equal to cope with, and about which there can be no misapprehension. Now a face is composed of features, those features of various subordinate parts, the eyes for instance of eye-lids, of eye-lashes, of the pupil, the iris, the white, &c., &c., all of which admit again of endless subdivision with changes of colour, texture, light and shade at every turn: who then will say that in looking at a face he has a perfect, distinct, and numerical idea of all these to the very letter, or that because he has not and can only distinguish the masses or general proportions and a *tout ensemble* of character and expression, that therefore he has no idea of a face at all, and cannot in the least tell one person from another? There is surely some difference between the knowledge which an able painter has of a head which he has carefully studied and the first cursory glance which a common person takes of the same head, yet the former (as the artist will himself tell you) is far from being perfect, and the latter (it is equally certain) is better than none at all. It would enable him to recollect and point out the same individual, perhaps years after. An intimate friend has some tolerable practical notion of another's face, yet ask what the colour of his eyebrows or the shape of his chin is, and see if he will be able to draw or give a tolerable description of either. He would hardly know them separately from the rest of the face and their joint effect. Let a figure be seen at a distance, I only know that it is something alive or moving; let it come nearer, I then can pronounce that it is a human figure; let it come still nearer, and I find it is a person whom I very well know and can swear to, though as yet I cannot distinguish any one feature of his face. But the air, the turn of the limbs and head, is enough. Is not all this, I would ask, the language of abstraction? I observe a carpet on the floor, and all that I think of is that it is a carpet, with probably some additional consciousness that it is rich or handsome. To come at this ultimate and sweeping conclusion on the totality of this multifarious impression, it would be necessary according to material reasoning that I should not only have a distinct and critical perception of the flowers or the general pattern of which it is composed, but of the positive texture and the size and number of the threads of which it is wove. Or do I count the rushes in a rush-bottomed chair, or remark further the stains and grain of the wood in a mahogany table? But without doing all this and making clear work at each step as I proceed, it is (say the individualists) impossible for me to conceive the slightest glimpse of any object or idea, so that all our knowledge by this theory, instead of seizing on general emblems and wholesale masses, must turn back and be resolved into the inextricable chaos of elementary and even unconscious sensations. On the other hand, all our knowledge is crusted and slubbered o'er, or a very little of

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it comes out clear and transparent, like an old portrait from the picture-cleaner's hands. It is well we have this imperfect, half-way knowledge, the result of our limited faculties, or with those same limited faculties we could not get on at all. For instance, I say this on which I am writing is a sheet of white paper. Now to do this is it necessary that I should pronounce categorically on each particle of whiteness, on its degrees, on the creases in the paper itself, before I can sum up in that general conviction and form of expression, or is it, or can it be, to me who have not infinite comprehension, any thing more than the result of a general simultaneous impression of a mass of similar impressions, which coalesce together in a certain rectangular oblong form, and are contrasted with the colour and appearance of the table, so as to assure me of the nature of the object on which I look, and its fitness for the purposes for which I want it? Nothing more either actually takes place or is fulfilled in the nature of things or of the human mind. The former never stamp an absolute image of themselves on the latter, or if they do so, it instantly and necessarily converts them into an abstraction. For a number and large extent of material objects press upon us and we must react upon them, and to do this we must conceive the masses and [word illegible] the extremes instead of attempting microscopic exactness—which would involve us in endless details and the imbecility of littleness without ever coming to a point even in that useless pursuit of every thing and nothing. I repeat then that I have an idea of likeness, of a class or kind of sensation, even in looking at a sensible object, as a white sheet of paper, and that this preconception of the abstract class is necessary to the smallest concrete impression, for if I could not lump two atoms or points of colour under a general head of likeness, I should be thrown back for ever on the infinite divisibility of my sensations, and should make no progress whatever in the synthetic method. If I must make the degrees and boundaries of white, greyish, &c., in my hand-breadth of the paper on which I write, I must mark the almost invisible texture of the parts of those parts, before I can conceive even the last, and so on *ad infinitum*, till my eyes and understanding are blind with folly. All sensible impressions therefore are at the same time abstract as well as complex ones; and their being complex proves that they are abstract or implies omniscience. There is no conception answering to the individuality of nature [except] that in the Almighty mind; all that we can attain to is a name, a vague unconnected notion, a passing effect, a dream of truth.—I do not say that there is any purely abstract or uncomprehended idea as of form without content, of extent without form, &c., as the schoolmen contended (I leave that point untouched and on one side), but I contend that in all sensible impressions before they can be taken off and used by the mind, there is a process of abstracting, classing or [word illegible] undergone, that the like is perceived in the midst of the unlike, [several lines illegible]. I think what I have here thrown out is sufficient, if not to establish, to shew the necessity for a new theory of thought and understanding.'

A third section opens in the MS., and appears to consist of roughly jotted notes for the completion of the essay. 'Association is not the only source of connection between ideas, but, as Hume has remarked, likeness and contrast.' A line or two are illegible, and the paragraph concludes: 'See Essay' [i.e. *An Essay on the Principles of Human Action*].

'As to materialism, I do not enter into it, having only to say that I do not think the arguments for it stated by Priestley and others. The doctrine of necessity seems to me demonstrable alike on any theory of the human mind: Hobbes has stated it unanswerably in his Tract on that subject (Refer Spinoza's work on the same subject) and Jonathan Edwards, the only writer who ever made any farther addition to it by shewing the fallacy which lurks by custom under the words necessary, irresistible, &c., which imply in common language the opposition of the will, but here depend upon its concurrence, so as to create a verbal confusion. Proper names, not know how to

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apply general terms any more than proper names, but for [word illegible] and being led by an idea in common. Fallacy in logic. The general proposition, *All men*, includes the particular instance about to be proved by it.

'Of self-love I have treated already, and of Grammar I shall hereafter. Besides sensibility to pleasure and pain I think there are two original principles of action which incapacitate and powerfully modify the first and all other actions, *viz.*, the love of truth or the involuntary perception of certain things as facts, and the love of power or will or action. I am not at liberty, for instance, to see black as white, and this makes it difficult for me to say that I do, however convenient.' The remaining two or three lines are illegible.

The 'Outlines of Grammar' referred to above was among MSS. in the possession of Mr. W. C. Hazlitt in 1867 (see *Memoirs*, i. xxxii), and was presumably included in the sale of his Hazlitt properties at Sotheby's in November 1893. It is not, like the majority of the MSS. in this sale, in the collection of Mr. A. C. Goodyear, and I have not succeeded in ascertaining its present ownership.

## OUTLINES OF TASTE

First printed by Hazlitt's son in *Sketches and Essays* (1839), as part of the essay 'On Taste' (vol. xvii. pp. 57 *et seq.*), from which it is here reprinted. It is clear, however, that the paper forms the fourth of the 'Outlines' proposed by Hazlitt to Constable in January 1828 (see introductory note to 'Outlines of Political Economy' in vol. xix.). In view of the more finished state of the text, it is probable that he revised the essay later, possibly for inclusion in his *Atlas* series of 'Definitions,' where, however, it did not make its appearance.

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386. *Mr. Pratt*. Samuel Jackson Pratt (1749-1814), whose *Sympathy, a Poem* was published anonymously in 1788.

387. '*Tbat come*,' etc. *A Winter's Tale*, iv. 4. 118-19.

388. '*And fit audience find*,' etc. *Paradise Lost*, vii. 31.

*In a former essay*. This reference is clearly to the unfinished paper, 'Outlines of the Human Mind,' reproduced above.

## BOSWELL REDIVIVUS: A FRAGMENT

First printed in P. G. Patmore's *My Friends and Acquaintance* (1854, III. 32-5), with the explanation: 'The following was intended by Hazlitt to form part of one of his Conversations with Northcote in *The New Monthly Magazine*, but was suppressed by the editor.' It probably formed part of 'Conversation the Third,' of October 1826. See vol. xi. p. 200.

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391. *H*——. Haydon, of course, for Hazlitt's relations with whom, following his return from his Continental tour, see the present editor's *Life* (pp. 383-4). *Some fine beads from the Cartoons*. Cf. *Sketches of the Picture Galleries* (vol. x. p. 70 and note).

392. *A letter from Wilkie, dated Rome*. Between November 1825 and February 1826. See Cunningham, *Life of Wilkie*, 1843, II. 189 *et seq.*

'*Out-Herod Herod*.' *Hamlet*, III. 2. 16.

'*This stamp exclusive*,' etc. 'A stamp exclusive, or professional.' Leigh Hunt, *The Story of Rimini*, III. 41.

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392. *Painter of the name of Edwards*. Cf. *Conversations of Northcote* (vol. xi. p. 200), where Hazlitt reinstates this sentence in slightly altered form.  
*Peter Pindar*. See *ante*, pp. 226-7.

### THE DAMNED AUTHOR'S ADDRESS TO HIS REVIEWERS

First printed by Mr. W. C. Hazlitt in *Lamb and Hazlitt* (1900). The present text is from the original in the possession of the editor, who, by a temporary inadvertence, overlooked that it forms Hazlitt's reply to *The Edinburgh Review's* notice of *The Spirit of the Age*, for which see introductory note to vol. xvi. Postmarked 'Sept. 8, 1825,' it occupies the first and second pages of a quarto sheet which bears on its third page :

'Dear Black,

Will you insert this, or hand it over to J. Hunt?

Yours ever,

W. H.

'I shall be home in about a month. I have been to Chamouny.

'Vevey, August 31.'

I do not find that Hazlitt's only known verse-attempt was printed either by John Black in *The Morning Chronicle* (in which his *Notes of a Journey* were appearing), or by John Hunt in *The Examiner*, to whom it was perhaps not handed.

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392. *Macculloch*. John Ramsay MacCulloch. Cf. vol. xvii. p. 312, *ante*, p. 245, and elsewhere.
393. *Allen*. John Allen, M.D. (1771-1843), political and historical writer, for many years in the confidence of Jeffrey and his coadjutors.  
*His Lordship*. Lord Holland, whom Allen accompanied abroad as medical adviser in 1801-5, afterwards becoming a regular inmate of Holland House.  
*Sir James*. Mackintosh, of course, for whom see *The Spirit of the Age*.  
*Sidney Smith*. More properly, Sydney Smith (1771-1845), to whom this is Hazlitt's only allusion—nor do we know if they ever met.  
*Brougham*. Henry Peter Brougham (1778-1868), created Baron Brougham and Vaux on his appointment as Lord Chancellor in 1830, for whom see *The Spirit of the Age*.  
*Thomas Moore*. For Moore's relations with *The Edinburgh Review* see vol. xvi., notes, *passim*.  
*Mill*. James Mill (1773-1836), a contributor from 1810.  
*Chenevix*. Richard Chenevix, F.R.S. (1774-1830), chemist and mineralogist, author of *Manuan Revels*, a comedy, *Henry VII.*, an historical drama, and *Leonora and Other Poems*.  
*To be dull!* The request to Jeffrey to be taken literally, presumably.

